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ABSTRACT

The report presents eight studies on the effectiveness of the Parents Training Parents Project sponsored by the PACER Center, Inc. (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights). The project is designed to provide information, training, and assistance to parents of handicapped children in regard to their rights and responsibilities under special education laws. The following studies are included: (1) a study of parents attending a PACER workshop and of control parents not attending a PACER workshop; (2) a retrospective study of parents who attended Levels II and III workshops (basic informational workshops); (3) a retrospective study of participants in Level IV (training of trainers); (4) a retrospective study of Level V (individual training assistance) participants ; (5) a survey of special education directors within Minnesota; (6) a survey of special education teachers within the state; (7) a survey of parent organizations throughout the United States that have received assistance from PACER; and (8) an examination of service-evaluation data collected in previous years. Extensive appendixes include sample forms, surveys, and participant questionnaires. (CL)

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PACER CENTER'S RESEARCH

ON THE

EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS

PARENTS TRAINING PARENTS PROJECT

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EC 190 265

PACER CENTER, INC.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The PACER Center, Inc. (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) was begun in 1976 as the parent training program of a coalition of 18 disability organizations concerned about the education of children with handicaps. It is located in Minneapolis, Minnesota and serves the entire state of Minnesota and, through its assistance to the growing number of parent training projects across the country, has served projects in a number of states.

Originally, members of the 18 organizations now comprising the PACER coalition (Appendix A) jointly recognized that if parents of handicapped children were to fulfill roles provided in the 1975 enactment of Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act), they would need systematic information about the major provisions of federal and state special education laws and regulations. These early organizers believed that parents needed training to effectively serve as partners with educators in their children's special education programming. The various disability organizations agreed on the benefits of working together as a coalition and of sharing the responsibility of parent education and training for parents of all handicapped children. Based on these convictions, PACER Center was established.

Soon after it was organized in 1976, PACER received a small grant from the Minnesota Department of Education, Division of Special Education, for a pilot project involving 21 parent training workshops to be presented throughout the state. At the completion of this project, the 18 organizations comprising the PACER coalition agreed that Minnesota had a need for an ongoing parent training center.

The former Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now Special Education Programs (SEP) of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) funded PACER Center in 1978, and again in 1981 and 1984, with two and three year parent training grants provided under the Division of Personnel Preparation. During these years, PACER broadened its funding base to include grants from various divisions of the U.S. Department of Education, from the Minnesota Department of Education, and from many private foundations and corporations within Minnesota.

PACER was established in 1976 with the philosophy of parents training parents, and a large percentage of the Center's staff continues to be composed of parents of handicapped children. To augment its regular staff, PACER makes extensive use of volunteers, many of whom are former parent participants in PACER training workshops. The composition of PACER's Board of Directors reflects the diversity within the organizations comprising the coalition, and includes among the representatives of the disability organizations parents of handicapped children, adults with disabilities, minority parents, and special educators.

Since its inception, PACER has reached thousands of parents, educators and other interested persons throughout the state. Requests for information and assistance regarding parent training have been received from many agencies, organizations and individuals outside Minnesota. PACER has assisted other parent training organizations in their formative stages and PACER's written materials have been utlized by many parent training organizations around the nation.

PROGRAMS

Since developing the Parents Helping Parents Project, which is described in more detail in the next few pages, PACER has initiated a number of other projects.

PACER programs are:

Bilingual and Bicultural Services PACER has bilingual and bicultural services available to parents of handicapped children. PACER 's basic booklet about laws and rights, PARENTS CAN BE THE KEY, and a collection of question and answer columns, PARENTS ASK PACER, are available in Spanish-English editions. Also PACER can refer Spanish-speaking parents to another parent of Hispanic background who has taken PACER training. Under preparation currently is an edition of PARENTS CAN BE THE KEY in the Hmong language. Also, PACER hopes to continue working with the Minneapolis school district in a program designed to reach and train Southeast Asian parents of handicapped students as well as ethnic community leaders. A new outreach program among Minneapolis' Native American community is scheduled to be underway by this spring.

Transition PACER is developing and piloting transition workshops. They are designed to meet information needs of students who are or will be leaving high school and entering the adult community. The transition-needs workshops are open to parents of older students, their young adult sons and daughters, and others with an interest in the varying needs of handicapped students in this age bracket.

TAPP Regional Center (Technical Assistance for Parent Projects.) PACER now serves as a regional center to offer technical assistance to parent training organizations in 13 Midwestern states, helping them strengthen and improve their services. Also, since its beginning, PACER has worked with groups throughout the United States who wish to begin a similiar organization and has available a booklet, PARENTS TRAINING PARENTS, that can be used in replicating PACER's programs.

Surrogate Parent Program. Through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Education, PACER has written materials that explain the state's new program to ensure that handicapped children without their own parents are represented by community volunteers or foster parents who act as surrogate parents. A training manual for surrogate parents is availabe for school districts to use in seeing that such individuals have the background and knowledge to make appropriate educational decisions for the children to whom they've been assigned. During 1985, PACER will conduct several training sessions throughout Minnesota for surrogate parents. Also PACER has conducted several workshops for school administrators and special eduation professionals who will be responsible for carrying out the surrogate parent program in their districts.

COUNT ME IN, PACER's Handicap Awareness Project COUNT ME IN has reached thousands of school children in the past five years with information about handicapping conditions and the message that children with disabilities are, in most ways, pretty much like everyone else. Designed to promote understanding and decrease the uneasiness felt by many children meeting handicapped classmates for the first time, evaluations of the COUNT ME IN shows by their audiences have consistently shown improved attitudes following the programs. The COUNT ME IN shows use life-size puppets, who represent children with a variety of handicapping conditions. In recent years, the program has been expanded for use among secondary-level students. In additon to training and working with metropolitan area volunteers to give shows in the Twin Cities area, the COUNT ME IN staff sells sets of PACER puppets and trains groups in other areas of Minnesota and outside the state so they can establish their own programs of handicap awareness.

COUNT ME IN Child Abuse Project. This year, PACER's COUNT ME IN staff has begu the development of a new project on child abuse. This pilot program will use the COUNT ME IN puppets with trained volunteers to present scripts on child abuse to general audiences of school children. During 1985, additional scripts will be written and the program will concentrate on the abuse of handicapped children.

Parents Helping Parents

While in many ways it is difficult to isolate one component of the total PACER program from the others, this evaluation focuses on the Parents Helping Parents project, the original PACER project and the continuing major activity of the organization.

During 1982-1983, PACER's Parents Helping Parents project served a total of 3,446 parents of handicapped children. Estimating and eliminating duplicative contacts with parents, PACER's services within this project during 1982-83 reached over 3,000 households with one or more handicapped children.

The stated purpose of the Parents Helping Parents program of the PACER Center is to provide information, training and assistance to parents of handicapped children about their rights and responsibilities under special education laws. PACER encourages parents to work with the schools to assure an appropriate education for their handicapped child. Attempts to fulfill this purpose are reflected in five distinct types of activity. PACER staff refer to these as "Levels" of activity, a designation that will be used in the remainder of this report. These activities are briefly described below.

Level I activities are those that seek to reach the general public with information about the educational rights of handicapped children and to inform parents of handicapped children about the availability of PACER's services. These efforts have included PACER-initiated newspaper, radio and television stories about the Center, about parents' rights, and about the training workshops; articles in newsletters and journals of advocacy and professional groups and other agencies; distribution of flyers about PACER workshops and of booklets on parents' rights and special education procedures and presentations to groups who request information about PACER Center about the educational rights of handicapped children and youth and/or about school related viewpoints of parents of handicapped children. Public service announcements for television have also been developed in an attempt to reach parents.

Level II and Level III activities are basic informational workshops on parents' rights and responsibilities and on special education laws and procedures; they're given either for audiences of parents of children with all handicaps (Level II) or for specific groups, for example, parents of Head Start youngsters or single low income mothers of handicapped children (Level III). These workshops are generally three hours in length, and always include a history of the development of special education legislation, and a review of assessment, IEP and due process procedures. Since 1978, PACER has given a total of 230 Level II and Level III workshops in urban, rural and suburban areas of Minnesota. The workshops have been attended by 6,429 persons. Although primarily geared to parents of handicapped children, the workshops are open to professionals and other interested persons, and, therefore, persons other than parents of handicapped children, have constituted approximately 32% of workshop participants. PACER also gives workshops on communication skills for parents of handicapped children.

Level IV activities are comprised of training of trainers workshops. These are designed for parents and professionals who possess basic knowledge of laws and regulations and special education processes but would like further information to be able to advocate more effectively for their own children or to assist and train other parents. Workshops provide updates on topical issues in special education and training for parents to enable them to assist PACER staff in presentations at PACER's Levels II and III workshops. Since 1978, 24 of these workshops have been attended by 640 people.

Level V services are those which provide individual training and assistance, as well as information and referral services to persons who have called or written PACER. This type of help is believed essential for the many parents whose need for assistance is immediate and specific or who cannot attend workshops because of schedule conflicts or the unavailability of workshops in their area. Since 1978, PACER has received 19,988 phone and mail inquiries; of which 26% were requests for individual assistance.

Purpose of the Evaluation

Evaluation data collected by PACER prior to this research evaluation project had been formative in nature, focusing on feedback from program participants that could be used in developing and modifying the PACER programs. A number of considerations, however, suggested to PACER staff and board of directors that there was a strong need to conduct a summative type study of measurable effects of PACER programs. These considerations included the fact that PACER was a mature project (having offered full programming for five years--1978 to 1983), that it was continuing to expand, that it was the primary source of parent training in Minnesota, and that it was involved in the development of new and replicated parent training projects nationwide. In 1982, therefore, PACER staff sought the assistance of evaluation consultants from the University of Minnesota to design a research evaluation study that could be funded by a Research Grant from Special Education Programs, the U.S. Department of Education.

PACER's programs and clients. In 1983, PACER was awarded $54,000 to fund this evaluation research. The purpose of this research was to objectively and empirically describe PACER's programs and clients. The research examined demographic characteristics, level of knowledge of the special education laws, attitudes concerning special education, and school involvement of persons participating in PACER parent training workshops and compared them with those of workshop non-participants. The study also gathered follow-up feedback and needs assessment information from persons using various PACER services. Finally, the evaluation examined the perceptions of PACER by professional educators, and the rated usefulness of PACER programs and materials to parent training programs around the country.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation had several components, the largest of which involved a research design. Parents attending any of six Level II workshops on the special education laws during the 1983-1984 school year completed identical questionnaires immediately before, immediately after, and five to eight months subsequent to their participation in the PACER workshop. The questionnaire gathered demographic information on parents and their handicapped children, and contained

items measuring parents' knowledge of the law, their attitudes toward special education, and their level of involvement in the IEP and assessment processes. Repeated completions of the questionnaire over time were intended to provide information on change in knowledge, attitudes and behavior associated with attendance at the PACER workshop.

Paired with these workshop attendees (referred to as the Experimental group or workshop participants) according to characteristics of their handicapped children were (referred to in the report as the Contrast group or nonparticipants) parents from the school district in which the workshop was given who had never attended a PACER workshop. These Contrast parents completed two questionnaires containing items identical to those given workshop attendees. The first of these questionnaires was completed roughly coincidental in time with the local PACER workshop, and the second, five to eight months subsequent to the date of the local workshop. Data from questionnaires completed by workshop attendees and non-attendees were compared for differences in demographic characteristics of the parents and their handicapped children, and for differences in knowledge of, attitudes toward, and involvement in the special education process.

Another segment of the evaluation involved surveying 1982-1983 attendees at PACER's Level II, III and IV workshops and 1982-1983 recipients of PACER's Level V phone individual assistance. All surveys requested feedback on the usefulness and comprehensiveness of information that had been provided by PACER and solicited suggetions for future PACER programs and services. Surveys sent to former attendees at Levels II and III workshops on the special education laws contained additional questions measuring respondents' knowledge of, attitudes toward, and involvement in the special education process.

A third segment of the evaluation was addressed to educational professionals within Minnesota. Special education teachers, some of whom had attended a PACER workshop for parents on the special education laws, were surveyed for their opinions on components of effective parental involvement in the special education process and for their viewpoints on which of these components parents were in need of information or training. Teachers who had attended a PACER workshop were asked for feedback on the degree to which the workshop had promoted constructive parent/teacher interactions. Special education directors were surveyed on their level of familiarity with PACER, on their opinions on current issues in special education, and on their impresssions of the degree to which PACER's services promoted informed and cooperative interactions by parents with school personnel.

The final two segments of the evaluation were smaller in scope. One segment involved a survey of parent training organizations throughout the country that had had substantive contact with PACER at any time during the past five years. Respondents were asked for feedback on the usefulness to their organizational development and programming of information and material that had been provided by PACER. The final segment in the evaluation consisted of a review of five years of evaluation data PACER had gathered from persons attending its Levels II, III and IV workshops and using its Level V phone information service. The data were examined for their representativeness of disabled students within Minnesota and for trends across years.

Major Findings of the Evaluation Research

The following pages summarize major findings of the PACER evaluation project. The findings are presented under headings for each of the three major groups

utilizing PACER services and materials: parents, professionals, and other p[illegible]t organizations. Under each heading a specific finding is noted with a brief n[illegible]e of explanation and amplification. Specific data pertinent to these findings are found in the body of the full report.

PARENTS

Workshop Participants

Parents who attend PACER workshops are demographically similiar to the parents who do not attend. Like parents of handicappd children who did not attend, the majority of PACER workshop participants were in their mid-to-late 30's. They had an average total of 3.1 children, and 1.25 handicapped children, the oldest of whom averaged 10 years of age.

Parents attending PACER workshops tend to be educationally different and vary in family status from parents not attending the workshops. Mothers who participated in PACER workshops tended to be better educated than non-participating mothers (e.g. 37% versus 26% had attended, though not necessarily completed, college). In out-state areas, a workshop participant was less likely to be a single parent (8% versus 23%) and more likely to be a full-time homemaker (62% versus 38%).

Before exposure to the PACER workshop, participants are more knowledgeable about special education laws and regulations than non-participants. Whether because of their generally higher educational level, their greater amount of interaction with other parents of handicapped children, their higher frequency of involvement in organizations for parents of handicapped children, or, in out-state areas, their greater frequency of attendance at workshops on special education topics, PACER workshop participants generally had more prior knowledge of this subject matter of the workshops than people who did not attend.

Parents who attend PACER workshops are similiar to non-participants in their level of confidence about their command of the provision of the special education law and their ability to assertively and constructively participate in planning their child's special education program. Although PACER workshop attendees were significantly more knowledgeable about the special education law than non-attendees, their confidence (that their knowledge of the law was adequate) was similiar to that of non-attendees. Attendees and non-attendees were very similar in frequency of attendance at IEP meetings and in their confidence in their ability to effectively participate in those sessions.

PACER workshop participants express a greater sense of isolation in dealing with their child's handicaps than do non-participants. An average of 48% of parents who attended PACER Level II workshops indicated that meeting other parents of handicapped children and/or getting support from others were among their reasons for attending. The specific desire to meet other parents was much more prevalent among out-state parents (57%) than among parents in the metropolitan area (24%).

PACER workshop participants tend to be less satisfied with their child's special education program than non-participants. Twenty three percent of non-participating parents reported themselves somewhat or extremely dissatisifed with their child's special education program, while 37% of workshop participants were similarly dissatisfied. Thirty five percent of attending parents said they were dissatisfied with the content of their child's IEP as compared with 16% of non-attendees. Forty one percent of workshop participants, versus 27% of

non-participants, reported having requested special education service not bei offered by the school, an action statistically correlated with overall dissatisfaction with a child's program.

Parents who attend PACER workshops have more interaction with other parents of handicapped children than parents who do not attend PACER workshops. Nearly half (43%) of the people attending PACER workshops reported prior sharing of information on the special education laws with other parents of handicapped children compared with 167% of workshop non-attendees. Prior to the workshop, 35% of the attendees were involved in groups for parents of handicapped children compared with 7% of non-attendees.

Over the course of the PACER workshop, participants' substantially increase their knowledge of the special education law, their confidence in the adequacy of this knowledge, and their confidence in their ability to assertively and constructively participate in planning their child's special education program. Participation in the three-hour PACER workshop resulted in an increase in the average score from 3.7 correct to 8.4 on a difficult 15-item test of detailed facts about the special education law. Ratings on attitude scales assessing the attendees' perception of the adequacy of their knowledge and ability to effectively participate in their child's special education moved in a decidedly positive direction: from an average of 2.99 to 1.95 on a 5 point scale with respect to knowledge about laws, and from an average of 1.94 to 1.57 with respect to ability to participate in their child's school program.

Over the course of the PACER workshop, attendees' sense of isolation in dealing with their child's handicaps decreases. Parents who went to PACER workshops tended to feel somewhat alone in dealing with their child's handicaps, and while workshop attendance did not erase that feeling, it did substantially reduce it (a sense of not feeling isolated increasing from 2.9 to 3.45 on a 5 point scale). The effect was in the same direction and of the same magnitude for both metropolitan and out-state parents. It is significant that while only 48% of the attendees listed the chance to meet other parents of handicapped children as a purpose for having attended the workshop, 84% of the participants indicated that meeting other parents was an aspect of the workshop enjoyed second only to receipt of special education information on laws.

Parents who attend PACER workshops state that their primary purpose is to gain information about the educational rights of handicapped children. Parents responded to a list of purposes for attending a PACER workshop and 94% indicated that they were attending to learn about their rights. While a decade after the passage of P.L. 94-142, this topic may seem passe to some, it clearly is not to the attendees of PACER workshops.

Parents attending PACER workshops tend to describe their family as being from all economic levels. From 138 parents who had attended a PACER workshop during 1982-83, 48% of the respondents placed their families at the middle income level with 33% below this point (12% low; 21% low middle) and 17% above (14% upper middle; 3 % high).

Long-term outcomes associated with workshop participation

In the 5-8 months subsequent to participation, PACER attendees maintain most of the information gain evident at completion of the workshop. On a 15 item test covering provisions of special education laws/regulations, workshop participants

scored 3.7 before the workshop, 8.4 after the workshop and 6.3 five to eight months later. Non-particpants, on the other hand, answered 2.4 items correct at the time of the workshop and 2.7 items correctly five to eight months later. While it is not evident whether maintenance of knowledge subsequent to the workshop was a function of reference to written materials provided at the workshops (58% reported they had referred to them), receipt of the PACER newsletter which is sent automatically to workshop participants, or phone contact with PACER to gain information (25% reported such subsequent contact), it is clear that the PACER workshop significantly increased participants' knowledge of the law and that this knowledge was maintained over time.

Five to eight months subsequent to the PACER workshop, participants retain most of their increased confidence about their command of the provisions of the special education law and about their ability to assertively participate in their child's special education program. Unlike non-attendees whose confidence about their knowledge of the law and their ability to participate in their child's special education program did not change during the 5-8 month follow-up period, workshop participants indicated continued higher levels of confidence in their abilities on the 5-8 month follow-up assessment . Although the rated levels of confidence decreased somewhat from their highest point immediately after the workshop, they were maintained at levels considerably closer to the post-workshop levels than to the pre-workshop levels.

Five to eight months subsequent to the workshop, PACER workshop participants retain a decreased sense of isolation in dealing with their handicapped child. Although there was an increase in the sense of isolation in the five to eight month period after workshop attendance, reported levels of isolation remained significantly lower than levels reported prior to the workshop.

During the five to eight months following the workshop, PACER workshop attendees increase their interaction with other parents of handicapped children. As noted earlier, a high percentage of parents who came to a PACER workshop are already involved in activities related to special education. Following workshops the percentage further increases. In the half year subsequent to the workshop, the percentage of participants that indicate they had provided information on special education law, and regulations to other parents increased from 43% to 61%. The proportion participating in formal or informal groups of parents of handicapped children increased 35% to 49%. (An almost identical percentage of the sample of the previous year's participants indicated such involvements, 58% providing information to other parents, 48% participating in a parents' group.)

A Summary Statement regarding the long-term effect of PACER workshops

While it is important to gather information on PACER workshops' success in transmitting information about special education laws and regulations and on the long-term retention of this information (also demonstrated in this research evaluation), it is the assumption that this knowledge leads to changes in the way parents perceive and act upon their rights and responsibilties on which justification for programs such as PACER's must ultimately be made. Therefore, a major emphasis in this research evaluation was placed on the long-term modification of attitudes and behavior among attendees and Contrast groups. The findings of this follow-up study (from Fall 1983 to May 1984) showed a consistent increase in positive attitudes and behavior in academic year 1983-1984 among those parents who attended a PACER workshop early in the year. No such change was found among the Contrast group.

Parents attending PACER workshops increased substantially in their satisfactio. with their child's program, in their participation in their child's IEP planning meetings, in maintaining school related records on their children, and in their level of involvement with other parents of handicapped children. Not only did PACER participants appear to benefit individually in many areas of attitude and behavior, a remarkable 61% indicated that they had provided information to other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities. Obviously the effects of this program stretch, in a nonqualifiable way, substantially beyond those who are directly taught by it.

Sources of Information about PACER Services

Referrals for most PACER contacts come through service, advocacy and parent organizations. Over the years, most persons using PACER services have been referred to PACER by disability and advocacy organizations, service organizations, school personnel and increasingly by PACER publicity. Clients generated by external publicly-oriented channels such as television, radio, newspapers, and brochures have decreased over the past two years.

Less than one-half of the workshop non-attendees in districts where workshops were held reported that they were aware of the workshop. Only 44% of workshop non-participants indicated they had been aware that a PACER workshop was being held in their district (56% were not aware of the PACER workshop). Of these parents, 72% indicated that the information had come from the school, most likely in the form of a flyer. Approximately one-quarter of parents who attended Levels II and III workshops in 1982-1983 indicated that flyers sent home from school had provided them their information about the workshops. As a method of attracting the non-active parents, flyers appear to have been an effective tool.

Individual Training and Information Service

The children of parents making direct inquiries for information approximate the normal age distribution of special education students. Unlike parents attending workshops, whose children tended to be young, the majority of the parents of handicapped children who called PACER for specific information (52%) had children 11 years of age or older. It would appear that PACER workshops tend to be used to obtain background information about special education relatively soon after a child is identified as handicapped and/or begins special education, and that PACER's Level V individual training and information service tends to be used by parents when specific questions arise throughout a child's educational career.

Users of the PACER information service are frequently persons already in contact with parent organizations or other parents of handicapped children. One third of the parents who called PACER for specific information had previously participated in PACER workshops, and one-third had participated in a special education related seminar conference or workshop given by another parent organization. One-third of the persons phoning PACER for information were members of a formal or informal group for parents of handicapped children, a percentage very similiar to the 35% of workshop participants belonging to such parent groups. Seventy one percent of persons using PACER's Level V service said they had previously provided special education information to other parents of handicapped children.

Persons using PACER's individual information and training service rate its usefulness very high. Users of PACER's Level V service rated it very high with

regard to the staff's ability to understand the problem/issue raised and the relevance and practicality of the information provided. Out-state parents rated PACER's Level V service more highly than metropolitan parents. The usefulness of PACER referrals to other resources/agencies was that aspect of Level V service rated least favorably.

Persons using PACER's Level V service indicate that the contact with PACER is important to their participation in their child's education. Parents contacting PACER by phone overwhelmingly (more than three-quarters of respondents) reported that PACER contact was moderately important or very important to a number of attitudes that PACER attempts to promote in parents: 1) the importance of being actively involved in a child's school program, 2) a determination and comfortableness in discussing a child's handicapping condition and school program with school personnel and others, and 3) an awareness of the rights of parents of handicapped children and associated procedures for resolving disagreements and 4) awareness of importance of maintaining records on the child's school performance.

PROFESSIONALS

Special education teachers strongly support the goals of PACER. Over two-thirds of a state sample of special education teachers indicated support for the benefits of training parents in the contents of special education law, the nature and contents of the IEP, and the nature of the process and instruments involved in assessment.

Special education teachers attending PACER workshops rate the workshops favorably in promoting the importance of communication between parents and teachers. Special education teachers who had attended PACER workshops rated them positively, and found them particularly effective in promoting the sense that parents and teachers are partners in advocating for the educational needs of handicapped children and the importance of parents communicating their satisfactions and dissatisfactions to school staff. Although still quite supportive of PACER's workshop content in these areas, teachers found the workshops less effective in promoting awareness that teachers do not determine the amounts or types of services available in a school, or that services are provided in response to assessed needs rather than simple desire.

PACER is extremely well-integrated into the administrative levels of special education in the state. All special education directors were familiar with PACER, virtually all had read PACER materials (96%) or had attended PACER presentations (92%) and over two-thirds (69%) had contacted PACER for information. Over half (58%) of responding special education directors had attended a PACER workshop. Nearly two-thirds (65%) knew of PACER involvement in discussions with specific parents and school staff within their district and 28% subscribed to PACER's other publication, its newsletter for advocates.

Special education directors generally rate PACER's performance positively, although metropolitan directors are much more positive than out-state directors. Metropolitan directors tended to rate PACER much more positively than out-state directors, although the latter were much more likely to have attended a PACER workshop (73% to 39%). While both groups saw PACER as successful in meeting its goals, there were some significant gaps between the extent to which metropolitan area and out-state directors saw PACER as fostering mutual respect between parents and professionals, showing fairness to all concerned when involved in

discussions between school staff and parents, and in promoting the view that special education teachers are partners with parents in advocating for childr .

State directors consider a parent organization representing multiple disabili groups (such as PACER) an asset. Ninety-one percent of directors who had attended PACER workshops indicated they would be comfortable in requesting teachers to urge parents of handicapped children in the district to attend a PACER workshop. Many of these directors recommended increased local district inolvement in the PACER workshop. Over two-thirds of the special education directors saw benefit to special education deriving from creative involvement of a PACER-like group in improving the quality of regular education.

OTHER PARENT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Other parent training organizations find PACER a useful source of information in developing their own programs. PACER has been a readily available resource for new and developing parent groups since 1978 and more recently through its participation in the National Network of Parent Centers and the federally-funded Technical Assistance for Parent Projects in which PACER serves as the primary technical assistance center for 13 states in the Midwest. During the last six and one half years, PACER has provided direct technical assistance to numerous parent projects in the United States. From a sample of 16 of these from around the country, 94% indicated that based on the assistance received to date, they would be extremely likely to recontact PACER for further assistance.

When parent training projects receiving PACER assistance provide a service component similiar to one of PACER's, they usually incorporate PACER materials. One hundred percent of the organizations surveyed that were providing workshops on special education laws, communication techniques, assertiveness skills, or training of parent trainers incorporated PACER materials into these services. Similiarly, 100% of the organizations preparing a newsletter for distribution or presenting handicap awareness programs in school or community settings used PACER materials in these projects.

Parents' suggestions for potential topics for future PACER activities.

Programs that provide parents, professionals and nonhandicapped children with information about the nature, needs and feelings of persons with handicaps are seen as the most needed. Parents' ratings showed three services to average between very important and moderately important on a five point scale. These were: 1) programs that increase the sensitivity of nonhandicapped students to the feelings and needs of handicapped students, 2) programs that provide parents with information about their child's handicaps(s), and 3) programs that teach school staff more about the nature of a child's handicap(s). Also judged as important were increasing professional openness to parental involvement, providing information to parents on methods of fostering the integration of their handicapped child into the least restrictive educational settings, and increasing parents' awareness of the results of research on factors contributing to educational effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) Center, the subject of the following research evaluation report, is a coalition of 18 organizations concerned with the education of handicapped students. The PACER Center office, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, provides a variety of training programs for parents of handicapped children throughout the state.

In 1976, members of the 18 organizations now comprising the PACER coalition (Appendix A) jointly recognized that if parents of handicapped children were to fulfill roles provided in the 1975 enactment of Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act), they would need systematic information about the major provisions of federal and state special education laws and regulations. These early organizers believed that parents needed training to effectively serve as partners with educators in their children's special education programming. The various disability organizations agreed on the benefits of working together as a coalition and of sharing the responsibility of parent education and training for parents of all handicapped children. Based on these convictions, PACER Center was established.

Soon after it was organized in 1976, PACER received a small grant from the Minnesota Department of Education, Division of Special Education, for a pilot project involving 21 parent training workshops to be presented throughout the state. At the completion of this project, the 18 organizations comprising the PACER coalition agreed that Minnesota had a need for an ongoing parent training center.

The former Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now SEP of OSERS) funded PACER Center in 1978, and again in 1981, with three year parent training grants provided under the Division of Personnel Preparation. During these years, PACER broadened its funding base to include grants from various divisions of the U.S. Department of Education, from the Minnesota Department of Education, and from many private foundations and corporations within Minnesota.

PACER was established in 1976 with the philosophy of parents training parents, and a large percentage of the Center's staff continues to be composed of parents of handicapped children. To augment its regular staff, PACER makes extensive use of volunteers, many of whom are former parent participants in PACER training workshops. The composition of PACER's Board of Directors reflects the diversity within the organizations comprising the coalition, and includes among the representatives of the disability organizations parents of handicapped children, handicapped adults, special educators and representatives from minority groups.

Since its inception, PACER has reached thousands of parents, educators and other interested persons throughout the state. Requests for information and assistance regarding parent training have been received from many agencies, organizations and individuals outside Minnesota. PACER has assisted other parent training organizations in their formative stages and PACER's written materials have been utlized by many parent training organizations around the nation.

Research Evaluation Purpose and Program Description

As cited in the grant proposal for this research evaluation project, there are data demonstrating that parents' involvement in their children's schooling is

positively associated with school achievement (Henderson, 1982), and data suggesting that the full potential of parent-school relationships outlined in Public Law 94-142 has not been generally realized (Flynn, 1980; Pyecha et al, 1980). Parent training programs were founded with the intent of improving the latter situation by training parents in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills conducive to comfortable and effective participation in their children's special education programs. At the time of preparation of this research evaluation grant, no research had been formally done of the effectiveness of any parent training program in realizing parent training goals. The research evaluation project described in the following report was designed to address this dearth of information.

Parents Helping Parents project is the specific part of PACER's overall programming that was the subject of the current evaluation. The types of activities included in the Parents Helping Parents project fall into five categories, which PACER labels Levels I through V. Level I activities encompass PACER's public relations and outreach efforts, which include: media spots describing PACER Center, parents' rights, and the training workshops; articles written for newsletters of advocacy groups and agencies serving the handicapped; brochures describing PACER's workshops; booklets on parents' rights and special education procedures; and presentations on the Center's programs and the parental role in special education at meetings of medical and educational professionals, business leaders, university students, and special education personnel

PACER's Levels II and III services consist of workshops for parents on the special education laws and on communication techniques helpful in IEP planning meetings. Level II workshops are intended for all groups of parents of children of any age or handicapping condition. Level III workshops are designed for specific populations of parents of handicapped children, such as parents of hearing impaired or mentally retarded students or parents of preschool aged children.

PACER's Level IV is designed for parents who will be assisting or training other parents. It consists of information workshops on topical issues in special education, and training workshops on how to train other parents with more detailed information than is presented in Levels II and III workshops. PACER's Level V service involves providing information to parents and professionals in response to mail and phone requests. An important segment of this service consists of individual training and assistance provided to parents in phone consultations or in person at school staffings.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation had several components, the largest of which involved a research design. Parents attending any of six Level II workshops on the special education laws during the 1983-1984 school year completed identical questionnaires immediately before, immediately after, and five to eight months subsequent to their participation in the PACER workshop. The questionnaire gathered demographic information on parents and their handicapped children, and contained items measuring parents' knowledge of the law, their attitudes toward special education, and their level of involvement in the IEP and assessment processes. Repeated completions of the questionnaire over time were intended to provide information on change in knowledge, attitudes and behavior associated with attendance at the PACER workshop. (The workshop participants are referred to as the Experimental parents in the report.)

Paired with these workshop attendees according to characteristics of their handicapped children were parents from the school district in which the workshop was given who had never attended a PACER workshop. (These nonworkshop participants are referred to as Contrast parents in this report.) These parents completed two questionnaires containing items identical to those given workshop attendees. The first of these questionnaires was completed roughly coincidental in time with the local PACER workshop, and the second, five to eight months subsequent to the date of the local workshop. Data from questionnaires completed by workshop attendees and non-attendees were compared for differences in demographic characteristics of the parents and their handicapped children, and for differences in knowledge of, attitudes toward, and involvement in the special education process.

Another segment of the evaluation involved surveying 1982-1983 attendees at PACER's Level II, III and IV workshops and 1982-1983 recipients of PACER's Level V phone individual assistance service. All surveys requested feedback on the usefulness and comprehensiveness of information that had been provided by PACER and solicited suggetions for future PACER programs and services. Surveys sent to former attendees at Levels II and III workshops on the special education laws contained additional questions measuring respondents' knowledge of, attitudes toward, and involvement in the special education process.

A third segment of the evaluation was addressed to educational professionals within Minnesota. Special education teachers, some of whom had attended a PACER workshop for parents on the special education laws, were surveyed for their opinions on components of effective parental involvement in the special education process and for their viewpoints on which of these components parents were in need of information or training. Teachers who had attended a PACER workshop were asked for feedback on the degree to which the workshop had promoted constructive parent/teacher interactions. Special education directors were surveyed on their level of familiarity with PACER, on their opinions on current issues in special education, and on their impresssions of the degree to which PACER's services promoted informed and cooperative interactions by parents with school personnel.

The final two segments of the evaluation were smaller in scope. One segment involved a survey of parent training organizations throughout the country that had had substantive contact with PACER at any time during the past five years. Respondents were asked for feedback on the usefulness to their organizational development and programming of information and material that had been provided by PACER. The final segment in the evaluation consisted of a review of five years of evaluation data PACER had gathered from persons attending its Levels II, III and IV workshops and using its Level V phone information service. The data were examined for their representativeness of disabled students within Minnesota and for trends across years.

A research advisory board was formed by PACER to assist with the development of surveys, questionnaires and policy. The advisory board consisted of parents, PACER board member representatives (both parents and special education professionals) special education directors, teachers, and research experts from private industry. Important to understanding the data gathered in this evaluation is knowledge of certain terminology used throughout the report. Minnesota is divided by the State Department of Education into 11 special education regions, of which one encompasses the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan

special education districts and 10, the smaller and more numerous special education districts throughout the remainder of the state. For the purposes of this study, these districts included within the one special education region are designated metropolitan districts, and districts included within the remaining 10 special education regions are referred to as out-state districts. Similarly, parents or professionals living within these regions are referred to as metropolitan or out-state respondents.

The continuum of special education service settings is graded in Minnesota into six levels, the definitions for which are provided below:

Level 1:	Child is in a regular education classroom with no special education service and child is observed for any difficulties she/he may be having
Level 2:	Child is in a regular education classroom; the special education teacher gives assistance to the classroom teacher but does not work directly with the child.
Level 3:	Child is in a regular education classroom 50% or more of the day but a special education teacher works directly with him/her some of the time.
Level 4:	Child is in special education classes 50% or more of the day but spends some time with nonhandicapped children in regular education classes.
Level 5:	Child spends all her/his time in a special education class or special education school.
Level 6:	Child is in a special education program at a residential facility for handicapped children.

STUDY 1

INTRODUCTION

Public Law 94-142 intended that handicapped children have access to free public education appropriate to individual needs in the least restrictive educational setting. To foster that end, parents of handicapped children were guaranteed access to decision making processes concerning their children's special education programs. For the intent of the law to be realized, however, parents had to be aware of the law's provisions and methods of utilizing them, and to meet these needs PACER Center established its training programs. Ten years after the passage of P.L. 94-142, it is important to examine the extent to which the law's objectives have been realized, and one component of such a determination is an examination of the impact of training programs on the nature and extent of parental involvement in their children's special education programs.

Study 1 compared demographic information from handicapped children's parents who attended PACER's Level II workshops on the special education laws with demographic information from handicapped children's parents who did not attend these PAER workshops. It also examined immediate and long-term changes in workshop attendees' attitudes, knowledge of the special education laws, and involvement in the special education process associated with attendance at the PACER workshop.

METHOD

Instrument

Surveys used in Study 1 were comprised of varying combinations of questions from six areas: 1) attitudes considered relevant to parental involvement in their children's special education, 2) factual information on the special education laws, 3) measures of the nature and extent of parental involvement in the IEP and assessment processes, 4) demographics 5) needs assessment, and 6) workshop feedback. The questions were developed and tested in a number of stages.

The co-directors of PACER, and PACER employees involved in workshop presentations and individual parent training and assistance, were asked for their views on the purposes of PACER workshops, the characteristics of parents attending the workshops, and components of effective parental involvement in the special education process. In addition, special education directors from districts involved in Study 1 (see Procedure) were asked to identify behaviors they considered important to effective parent participation. Based on information from these sources, an initial draft of the questionnaire was constructed and sent for written feedback to all members of the research advisory board, and to several PACER employees. The questionnaire was revised based on written returns from sixteen of these people and from information gathered in oral administration of the questionnaire to a parent of a child receiving special education. The attitude and knowledge questions were then field tested with thirty families, all of whom had children receiving special education. Based on field test results, the questions were edited for inclusion in the various forms of surveys used in Study 1 (Appendix 1).

Subjects

Parents involved in Study 1 were divided into five groups. The Experimental group was composed of parents who attended any one of six PACER workshops on special education laws in out-state and metropolitan areas that were targeted for inclusion in this study during the 1983-1984 school year. These parents completed three questionnaires: one immediately prior to the start of the workshop, one immediately subsequent to completion of the workshop, and one at the end of the school year (five to eight months after the workshop date).

The Contrast group was composed of parents who had not attended any of the six PACER workshops included in this study or, by study design, a PACER workshop of any sort at any time. Parents in this group had children receiving special education in those districts in which the targeted PACER workshops had been given. A Contrast parent was matched with an Experimental parent who had attended a PACER workshop in his/her school district according to the age, sex, disability, and level of special education service of the respective children. Contrast parents completed an initial questionnaire within 4-8 week of the date of the PACER workshop given in their district, and a second questionnaire at the end of the school year.

The Motivation group was chosen as a control for differential motivation being the suggested cause of any differences found in questionnaire results between Experimental and Contrast parents. Motivation parents had registered for but failed to attend a PACER workshop. Parents in the Motivation group completed two questionnaires, each at the same time as Contrast parents in their respective local areas.

The Materials group was comprised of parents randomly selected from the Contrast and Motivation groups after these two groups had completed the initial questionnaire. Five to seven weeks after completion of their first questionnaire, materials parents were mailed the packet of information on the special education laws that is distributed to PACER workshop participants. The Materials group was created to assess possible effects of the availability of written workshop materials on final questionnaire results from the Experimental group. People in the Materials group completed a second questionnaire at the end of the school year.

The Longitudinal group consisted of extra Contrast parents who were redundant matches for Experimental parents. People in this group completed one questionnaire at the end of the school year. The Longitudinal group was established as a control for possible motivating effects on Contrast parents of exposure to the information and concepts contained in the initial questionnaire.

Procedure

Experimental Group

Parents in the Experimental group attended PACER workshops in one of six locations:

Out-state

Thief River Falls	September 29, September 30, 1983
Faribault	October 15, 1983
Fairmont	October 18, 1983
Hibbing	October 27, 1983

Metropolitan

Minneapolis	November 5, 1983
Robbinsdale	December 5, 1983

Immediately prior to the start of each workshop, the research coordinator briefly described the federal research evaluation grant, requested parents' cooperation, and explained that if an individual completed all three questionnaires - one prior to the start of the workshop, one at the completion of the workshop, and one at the end of the school year - he/she would receive a $10 stipend from PACER. Parents were not informed that the same items would be contained in each of the questionnaires.

The questionnaire administered before the start of the workshop consisted of three sections arranged in the following order: attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. The questionnaire at the end of the workshop repeated the previous attitude and knowledge sections, and contained, in addition, demographic and workshop feedback items. The questionnaire mailed to parents at the end of the school year in May contained attitude, knowledge, behavior and demographic items from the earlier questionnaires and included in addition, needs assessment and longitudinal feedback items. Enclosed with the mailed questionnaire was a cover letter reminding parents of their prior involvement in the evaluation project, and a form requesting the $10 stipend which was to be signed and returned with the completed questionnaire. Follow-up phone calls were made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

The outline of the informational material to be presented to participants was the same for each of the six workshops, and included history of the development of special education legislation, and review of assessment, IEP, and due process procedures. Depending upon time constraints, all or some of the following were also included in workshops: small group discussions, role-playing simulations of communication styles during an IEP meeting, and a description by a handicapped woman of her educational experiences prior to P.L. 94-142. One particular speaker appeared at all six workshops, while the remaining 2-3 speakers per workshop were drawn from a pool of four women.

Contrast Group

By prior arrangement in 5 of the 6 workshop sites (Thief River Falls, Faribault, Hibbing, Minneapolis, Robbinsdale), an anonymous list containing the age, sex, handicap and level/type of special education service of children of parents

attending the PACER workshops was submited to the special education directors in each of the respective districts. Directors were asked to randomly generate for each child of a workshop participant a list of 4-6 special education students drawn from current or immediately prior school year attendance rosters. The generated list of 4-6 children was to match the Experimental child on the four variables as closely as possible, with rank order of match being age, primary handicap, level of service and sex.

School districts mailed to the parents of selected children a letter composed by the research coordinator briefly describing PACER and the research project, and explaining that if parents were to immediately complete a questionnaire and then a second one at the end of the school year, they would receive a $10 stipend. Enclosed with this letter was a cover letter from the district and a form for parents to sign and return to the district granting permission for release of their name to PACER. If the originally identified parents were not willing to cooperate in the research, the school district generated further matches until a cooperating parent was located.

Upon receipt of a name from a school district, the research coordinator contacted the parents by phone and arranged to administer the questionnaire in his/her home, a restaurant, or a public meeting room within the parent's local school district. The questionnaire was administered by the research coordinator, her assistant, or one of three college students hired specifically for this aspect of the research project who had no other connection with PACER. Depending upon the district, questionnaires were administered to Contrast parents within 4-8 weeks of the date of the PACER workshops attended by the matched Experimental parents.

The Contrast questionnaire contained the same attitude, knowledge, behavior and demographic items included in the questionnaire given Experimental parents. In place of workshop feedback items were items asking Contrast parents to indicate their reasons for not having attended the PACER workshop. The second and final questionnaire sent to Contrast parents was mailed at the same time in May as the final questionnaire was mailed to Experimental parents. The forms for the two groups were identical except questions eliciting feedback on the workshop included in forms sent to Experimental parents were replaced in the Contrast form by questions to determine the effect of the first questionnaire on subsequent attitudes, knowledge and behavior of the Contrast parents. Follow up phone calls were made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

Motivation Group

The Motivation group consisted of parents who had registered but failed to attend PACER workshops in either Hibbing, Faribault, Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, or in an additional metropolitan site in Rosemount. These parents were contacted by phone to explain the research project and to elicit their cooperation in completing two questionnaires in return for a $10 stipend. If a parent agreed to participate, s/he was administered the initial questionnaire on a one-to-one basis in his/her home or in a local restaurant. The questionnaire was identical to that completed by Contrast parents, and it was given to Motivation parents at the same time and by the same person as the questionnaires administered to Contrast parents living within the same school district. (Motivation parents in Rosemount completed the questionnaire at the time Contrast and Motivation parents did in Minneapolis.) The second questionnaire completed by Motivation parents was the same as the second questionnaire completed by Contrast parents, and it was sent through the mail in May with identical accompanying materials as those sent to Contrast

parents. Follow up phone calls were made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

Materials Group

The Materials Group consisted of parents drawn randomly from the Contrast and Motivation groups after these groups had completed their initial questionnaire. Within 5-7 weeks of completing their first questionnaire, parents in the Materials group were mailed the folder of written materials on special education laws that PACER distributes to workshop participants. No explanation for sending the material was included with the packet.

Material parents were mailed their second questionnaire and a form to request their $10 stipend at the same time as other groups in May. The final questionnaire was identical to that administered Contrast parents except that it contained questions to elicit feedback on the use these parents might have made of the written materials they had received. Follow-up phone calls were made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

Longitudinal Group

The Longitudinal group consisted of parents who had been contacted by special education personnel in Hibbing, Faribault, Minneapolis and Robbinsdale to serve as matches for Experimental parents. These parents had given their written permission to the district to allow release of their names to PACER. However, as they were extra matches for specific Experimental parents, they were not included in the Contrast group. Instead, these parents were contacted in May by mail and reminded of their earlier willingness to be called by PACER concerning a research project. A subsequent phone call was made to elicit their cooperation and to explain they would receive a $5 stipend for completion of a questionnaire. The questionnaire sent to the Longitudinal group in May was the same as that sent to other groups in May except that it included extra demographic items. Follow-up phone calls were made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

RESULTS

The number of parents in each of the five groups completing questionnaires at the initial and longitudinal stages of Study 1 is reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Number of Parents Completing Questionnaires.

	Initial	Longitudinal
Experimental	112	89
Contrast	134	91
Motivation	36	22
Materials	---	27*
Longitudinal	---	25

*The Materials group was drawn from the initial Contrast and Motivation groups, and the follow-up totals for these two groups reflect this diminution.

Demographics

Demographic data were collected on initial questionnaires. Measures on which change might likely have occurred during the school year were repeated on the May questionnaire. The May data will be reported for only those measures on which there was a significant and meaningful difference in responses between the two sets of questionnaires.

Differences between Experimental and Contrast groups on the May questionnaire could arguably be attributed to differences in motivation, necessitating comparison of these data with results from Motivation parents. For such a comparison to be useful, the degree to which the randomly selected Motivation group resembles the Experimental and Contrast groups has to be indicated. Demographic data from Motivation parents, therefore, will be included in tables; the focus throughout, however, will be on similarities or differences between the Experimental and Contrast groups.

Children's Characteristics

Experimental and Contrast parents were matched on the basis of certain of their children's characteristics: age, handicap, level of special education service, and sex. Age was the first characteristic for which districts were asked to match children. The mean ages for the oldest handicapped child within a family were:

Experimental	10.01 years
Contrast	10.34 years
Motivation	9.66 years

Handicapping condition was the second characteristic for which districts were asked to match each pair of children. Table 2 presents descriptive data as provided by parents for the oldest handicaped child in a family.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Respondents by Group Indicating Each Disability as Their Oldest Child's Primary or Accompanying Handicap.

Primary				Accompanying		
Experimental	Contrast	Motivation		Experimental	Contrast	Motivation
4%	2%	0%	Visual Impairment	12%	9%	14%
8%	5%	9%	Hearing Impairment	14%	14%	19%
5%	10%	9%	Speech Impairment	26%	32%	39%
16%	3%	13%	Cerebral Palsy/Other Physical Handicaps	24%	6%	17%
2%	3%	4%	Epilepsy/Diabetes/ Other Health Related Disorders	14%	5%	3%
25%	8%	0%	Mental Retardation	34%	14%	19%
0%	4%	0%	Behavior Problem	18%	22%	22%
2%	1%	0%	Emotional Disturbance	8%	10%	0%
1%	1%	0%	Behavior Problem/ Emotional Disturbance	5%	11%	17%
31%	60%	57%	Learning Disability	54%	72%	81%
2%	0%	9%	Autism	4%	5%	6%
3%	2%	0%	Other	6%	6%	3%

The discrepancy (x^2=32.77; df=11; p=.0006) between Experimental and Contrast groups in the primary handicaps of their children can in great measure be accounted for by the procedure used to select the Contrast parents. An Experimental parent reported his/her child's disability(ies) and indicated what he/she considered the primary handicapping condition. The school district examined the combination of handicaps reported for any given Experimental child and chose what it considered to be the primary handicapping condition in light of educational considerations. The district then based its selection of a matching Contrast student on what it had identified as the Experimental child's primary handicapping condition.

The effect of this process is most evident in the category of physical handicaps. Where Experimental parents reported a physical condition as the primary disability, the school was likely to identify a learning related disorder as the primary handicapping condition. However, the high representation of parents of physically handicapped students drawn to PACER workshops is a real phenomenon, and is evident in the difference in reported frequency of primary and accompanying physical handicaps between the Contrast group (the frequency for which closely reflects that of the general handicapped population in Minnesota) and both the Experimental and Motivation groups.

The third chacteristic in order of priority for which districts were to match children was type/level of special education service (Table 3). Levels I-VI indicate increasing degrees of restrictiveness in the classroom environment, with Level I involving observation in the regular education classroom and Level VI indicating a residential treatment center (Appendix 8).

TABLE 3

Percentage of Repondents by Group Indicating Each Level/Type of Special Education Service for Their Oldest Child.

	Experimental	Contrast	Motivation
Preschool/DAC	7%	11%	25%
Level I	8%	8%	3%
Level II	1%	2%	3%
Level III	39%	48%	39%
Level IV	15%	15%	14%
Level V	23%	10%	14%
Level VI	2%	5%	3%
Not Sure	5%	2%	0%

The least important characteristic in matching children was sex. Based on the oldest handicapped child within a family, the percentage of male and female children within each of the three groups was generally similar:

Experimental	Male - 77%	Female - 23%
Contrast	Male - 70%	Female - 30%
Motivation	Male - 71%	Female - 29%

To further examine the degree of similarity in experience between Experimental and Contrast parents, two other variables were considered. Data in Table 4 are based on the oldest handicapped child within a family.

TABLE 4

Mean Time Since Identification and Initial Service for Oldest Handicapped Child.

	Experimental	Contrast	Motivation
Length of time since identification of primary handicap	5.90 years	5.30 years	5.20 years
Length of time receiving special education service	4.39 years	4.45 years	4.82 years

For the purposes of this study, parents were sufficiently similar across the constellation of children's characteristics to consider the Contrast parents a valid control group for the possible effects of workshop attendance on Experimental parents.

Respondents' Characteristics

Of interest to PACER in its program planning are the characteristics of the population choosing to use its service. Of equal importance, but less readily available, is information on persons within PACER's target population that do not attend its workshops; responses from Contrast parents on a number of demographic items provide these data. Differences in demographic characteristics between Experimental and Contrast parents will be examined for correlations with divergent responses between the two groups on attitude, knowledge and behavior questions.

Table 5 contains data on the last type of school attended by the female/mother and male/father within the surveyed households. Contrast parents generally reported less formal education than Experimental parents, and out-state respondents reported less than metropolitan respondents. Women are the preponderant sex at PACER workshops, and the difference in their education between Experimental and Control groups was significant (x^2=11.23; df=4; p=.0242).

TABLE 5

Percentage of Respondents by Group Indicating Each Type of School Last Attended.

FEMALE/MOTHER

	Primary	Secondary	Trade	College	Graduate
Experimental	0%	31%	21%	37%	11%
Out-state	0%	33%	22%	36%	9%
Metropolitan	0%	24%	17%	41%	17%
Contrast	3%	45%	21%	26%	5%
Out-state	4%	45%	21%	27%	3%
Metropolitan	0%	46%	22%	22%	10%
Motivation	0%	36%	22%	36%	6%

MALE/FATHER

	Primary	Secondary	Trade	College	Graduate
Experimental	3%	35%	20%	29%	13%
Out-state	3%	42%	19%	26%	10%
Metropolitan	4%	13%	21%	38%	25%
Contrast	9%	42%	15%	23%	12%
Out-state	11%	43%	16%	20%	9%
Metropolitan	4%	37%	11%	30%	19%
Motivation	3%	42%	23%	23%	10%

The greater similarity between males than between females across Experimental and Contrast groups was evident to such an extent in employment status that it allows inclusion of data for only females/mothers in Table 6. There was a significant difference in employment status between Experimental and Contrast women overall (x^2=9.41; df=3; p=.0244), and between out-state Experimental and Contrast women in particular (x^2=17.29; df=6, p=.0083).

TABLE 6

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Type of Employment for Female/Mother.

	Full Time Homemaker	Full Time Outside Home	Part Time Outside Home	Paid Work Inside Home
Experimental	59%	17%	22%	2%
Out-state	62%	15%	21%	2%
Metropolitan	52%	24%	24%	0%
Contrast	43%	24%	25%	8%
Out-state	38%	24%	28%	10%
Metropolitan	54%	24%	17%	5%
Motivation	46%	29%	20%	6%

The greater similarity across Experimental and Contrast groups between metropolitan respondents than between out-state respondents evident in employment status was also apparent in data on single parent families (Table 7). There was a significant (p=.007) difference in the percentage of one-parent households between the Experimental and Contrast group overall, and between out-state Experimental and Control households (p=.009) in particular.

TABLE 7

Percentage of Respondents by Group Indicating a Single Parent Household.

Experimental	12%
Out-state	8%
Metropolitan	21%
Contrast	25%
Out-state	23%
Metropolitan	29%
Motivation	11%

Summary data on the age of the respondents, the total number of children per family and the number of handicapped children per family are included in Table 8. There were no significant differences between Experimental and Control groups on these measures.

TABLE 8

Means for Characteristics of Respondents and Their Families by Group.

	Age	Total Number of Children	Total Number of Handicapped Children
Experimental	37.13	3.12	1.24
Out-state	36.54	3.26	1.24
Metropolitan	38.32	2.72	1.24
Contrast	36.32	3.11	1.26
Out-state	35.78	3.23	1.22
Metropolitan	37.56	2.83	1.34
Motivation	36.63	3.03	1.22

The picture that emerges of the female who attended a PACER workshop is one of a woman with more formal education and a greater likelihood of being part of a two parent family, and a greater likelihood of being a full time homemaker than the female who did not attend the workshop. Female respondents who had registered to attend a PACER workshop but failed to do so (Motivation group) resembled Experimental females in education and single parent family status, but not in employment.

Prior Information on the Special Education Laws

Important to the interpretation of differences between Experimental and Contrast groups are data on the level of information on the special education law each

group had before completing the first PACER questionnaire. Table 9 presents these data. During the 1982-1983 school year, Experimental parents accessed sources of information on educational rights of handicapped children to a significantly greater degree ($p \leq .05$) than Contrast parents in all categories except one: school personnel, whom Contrast parents contacted to a significantly greater degee ($p \leq .001$) than Experimental parents. The difference between the two groups in accessing school personnel was accounted for by out-state Contrast respondents of whom 70% indicated school personnel as a source of information on special education rights. The difference between Experimental and Contrast parents in out-state areas was significant ($p \leq .05$) for each category of resources on the special education law. Within the Experimental group, out-state respondents made use of resources for information on the law to a greater extent than metropolitan respondents in all categories except one: phone contact with PACER.

TABLE 9

Percentage of Respondents by Group Indicating Each Resource as a Prior Source of Information on Educational Rights of Handicapped Children.

	School Personnel	Parents of Handicapped Children	PACER Newsletter	Other Newsletters	PACER Literature	Other Literature	Phone Contact with PACER	Other Phone Contact	Workshop/ Seminar/ Conferences
Experimental	40%	46%	35%	33%	25%	26%	19%	18%	23%
Out-state	41%	51%	36%	35%	25%	31%	14%	22%	28%
Metropolitan	38%	34%	31%	28%	24%	10%	31%	7%	10%
Contrast	62%	23%	12%	7%	11%	5%	6%	5%	12%
Out-state	70%	27%	12%	5%	13%	5%	5%	3%	12%
Metropolitan	44%	12%	12%	10%	7%	2%	7%	10%	12%
Motivation	44%	36%	25%	14%	17%	14%	11%	22%	23%

Attitudes

The attitude section of the questionnaire consisted of 10 statements, and respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each of them (Appendix 1). Four of the items stated

that the respondent was sufficiently familiar with a specific aspect of the la to be able to use it to promote his/her child's education. Another four state the respondent would be assertive in various interactions with the school concerning his/her child's program. One of the items identified the respondent as feeling alone in situations dealing with his/her handicapped child. The remaining item was deleted in analysis of the data because of ambiguity in meaning.

Initial Attitudes of Experimental and Control Groups

A mean response for each statement for the Experimental and Contrast groups was calculated. The means for the four knowledge based items were combined and averaged for each group, and this overall mean was labelled Attitude-Knowledge (AK). Similarly, the means for the four assertive behavior items were combined and averaged for each group, and this overall mean was labelled Attitude-Behavior (AB). The group mean for the item measuring the respondent's sense of isolation in dealing with his/her child's handicap was labelled Attitude-Loneliness (AL). The lower the numerical mean for AK and AB, the greater was the agreement by parents with statements saying the respondent knew how to utlize the provisions of the law or would be assertive in interacting with school staff. The lower the numerical mean for AL, however, the greater was the isolation felt by the respondents.

Summary data from attitude questions on the initial questionnaires are contained in Table 10. For the Experimental group, this initial questionnaire was the one administered immediately prior to the beginning of the PACER workshop.

TABLE 10

Mean Response By Category of Item to Attitude Questions on Initial Questionnaire.

	AK		AB		AL	
Experimental	2.99		1.94		2.93	
Out-state		2.81		1.88		2.92
Metropolitan		3.49		2.11		2.97
Contrast	2.66		1.94		3.40	
Out-state		2.66		1.91		3.43
Metropolitan		2.66		1.98		3.32

Experimental and Contrast parents were not significantly different in their responses to knowledge (AK) or behavior related (AB) attitude items. However, metropolitan Experimental parents agreed significantly less (p=.000) than

out-state Experimental parents with statements indicating the respondent had sufficient knowledge of the special education law to utilize it to his/her child's benefit. Experimental parents overall indicated a significantly (p=.005) greater sense of isolation in dealing with their children's handicaps (AL) than did Contrast parents, and the difference between the two groups on this measure was evident at a significant level (p=.000) in out-state areas.

There was a positive and significant correlation between AK and AB for both Experimental and Contrast parents (p=.004, and p=.001, respectively), so that the more parents indicated they knew how to utilize the law, the more they indicated they would be assertive in interactions with school staff. The level of agreement by the Experimental group with the attitude statement indicating it was the parent's responsibility to monitor a school's compliance with the law in providing his/her child's education was significantly greater (p=.000) than the group's level of agreement with the statement indicating the respondent had sufficient knowledge of the law to know if the school was violating any portion of it. The difference in the level of agreement with these two items was not significant for the Contrast group.

Parents who had attended the PACER workshop to meet other parents of handicapped children (p=.001) and parents who had attended the workshop to get support from others (p=.004) reported a significantly greater sense of isolation in dealing with situations surrounding their child's handicap(s) than parents who had attended the workshops for other than these purposes. Parents who had attended a prior workshop/seminar/conference on the special education laws reported significantly less of a sense of isolation in dealing with their child's handicap(s) than parents who had not (p=.019).

Immediate Effects of Workshop Participation on Attitudes

Table 11 contains data from the attitude questions completed by Experimental parents at the end of the PACER workshop. There was a significant difference between pre-workshop and post-workshop mean responses on all three categories of attitude items (p=.000).

TABLE 11

Mean Response by Category of Item to Attitude Questions on the Post Workshop Questionnaire.

	AK	AB	AL
Experimental	1.95	1.57	3.45
Out-state	1.95	1.64	3.41
Metropolitan	1.95	1.35	3.55

On all measures, metropolitan parents showed the greatest degree of change, a. in so doing, eliminated the significant difference in mean response to knowlec e related items that had existed between out-state and metropolitan Experimental parents prior to the workshop. After having listened to material presented at the PACER workshop, parents significantly increased their agreement with statements saying they knew how to utilize provisions of the special education law and with statements saying they would be assertive in interactions with school staff. Parents also indicated a decreased sense of isolation in dealing with situations surrounding their child's handicap.

Long-Term Effects of Workshop Participation on Attitudes

To see if the immediate attitude change noted after workshop participation was maintained, attitude questions were administered again in May 1984, to both Experimental and Contrast parents. Data from this administration are contained in Table 12 along with comparative data from prior administrations.

TABLE 12

Mean Responses By Category of Item to Attitude Questions on Separate Administrations of the Questionnaire.

	AK		AB		AL	
	Exper-imental	Contrast	Exper-imental	Contrast	Experi-imental	Contrast
Pre-workshop	2.99	(2.66)	1.94	(1.94)	2.93	(3.40)
Post-workshop	1.95	--	1.57	--	3.45	--
May	2.26	(2.56)	1.63	(1.94)	3.28	(3.42)

For Experimental parents, the mean responses for the three categories of attitude items on the May questionnaire slipped from post-workshop values toward pre-workshop values, but for only one category -AK- was the departure from the post-workshop value statistically significant (p=.000). There remained for Experimental parents significant differences between mean responses in May and pre-workshop mean responses for all three categories of attitude questions (AK: p=.000; AB: p=.001; AL: p=.037). In contradistinction, there was little or no change in the mean response from the initial questionnaire to the mean response on the May questionnaire for Contrast parents in any of the three categories of attitude items. That is, nothing intervened during the 1983-1984 school year in the lives of parents in the Contrast group with an effect on measured attitudes equal to that associated with attendance at a PACER workshop. It can be concluded that the workshop had an immediate and lasting effect in constructively changing Experimental parents' attitudes about their ability to utilize the provisions of the special education law, about their assertiveness in interactions with school staff, and about their sense of isolation in dealing with situations surrounding their children's handicaps.

Knowledge

The knowledge section of the questionnaire contained 15 items reviewing specific factual information contained in the special education laws (Appendix 1). The alpha reliability (internal consistency) of the knowledge section was 0.79.

Initial Knowledge Level of Experimental and Contrast Groups

Table 13 presents the mean number of knowledge items answered correctly on the initial administration of the questionnaire. For Experimental parents, the initial questionnaire was administered immediately prior to the PACER workshop.

TABLE 13

Average Number of Correct Responses to Knowledge Questions on the Initial Questionnaire.

Experimental	3.68	
Out-state		3.99
Metropolitan		2.79
Contrast	2.42	
Out-state		2.52
Metropolitan		2.18
Motivation	3.06	

Experimental parents completed a significantly (p=.000) larger number of knowledge items correctly than Contrast parents, and the difference between the two groups was most evident in out-state areas (p=000). Ten people within the Experimental group completed eight or more of the knowledge items correctly, while only one person in the Contrast group did so. The percentage of Experimental parents answering any question correctly ranged between 1% and 39% for 14 of the 15 items. One question was unique in that a relatively large percentage of both groups answered it correctly (Experimental - 66%; Contrast - 51%):

> A handicapped child's right to a free special education depends on the school district's having sufficient money to provide appropriate programs for that child.

For both the Experimental (p=.001) and Contrast (p=.009) groups, a larger number of correct responses on the knowledge section of the questionnaire was correlated with a greater mean level of agreement with knowledge related items (AK) on the

attitude portion of the questionnaire. Parents' sense of their knowledge of t.e law, regardless of the group to which they belonged, was predictive of their ability to answer factual questions correctly.

There was a positive correlation between the level of the female/mother's education and the number of knowledge items answered correctly for Contrast (p=.001) and Experimental (p=.028) parents overall. Within the Experimental group, the correlation between female education and performance on the knowledge section of the questionnaire was statistically significant (p=.011) only in out-state areas. If differences in the level of education between out-state and metropolitan Experimental women were controlled, there was a significant positive correlation between number of knowledge items answered correctly and receipt of PACER's newsletter (p=.008) and phone contact with PACER Center (p=.004) for Experimental parents living in the metropolitan area. For out-state Experimental parents, there was a significant positive correlation between performance on the knowledge section of the questionnaire and receipt of a newsletter (p=.005), receipt of literature on special education laws (p=.001), and phone contact (p=.012), all with or from a disability group or a parent organization other than PACER. Attendance at a prior workshop on the special education laws by out-state Experimental parents was also correlated (p=.011) with their ability to answer knowledge items correctly. Finally, for the Experimental group as a whole, the older the first handicapped child (p=.014) and the longer the first handicapped child in a family had received special education service (p=.013), the larger was the number of knowledge items answered correctly.

Immediate Effect of Workshop Participation on Knowledge

Experimental parents answered the same 15 knowledge questions at the end of the PACER workshop. There was a significant difference between pre- and post-workshop scores for the group as a whole (p=.000), and for out-state (p=.000) and metropolitan (p=.000) parents taken separately. The average number of items answered correctly by the Experimental group as a whole on this administration was 8.37 versus 3.68 on the pre-workshop questionnaire. Out-state respondents increased correct responses to 8.35 from 3.99 and metropolitan respondents increased to 8.41 from 2.79. The number of respondents completing eight or more items correctly increased from 10 to 70 people. Scores of metropolitan parents increased to a greater degree than scores of out-state parents, eliminating the statistically significant difference that was found between their scores prior to the workshop.

There were parents who attended the PACER workshop who arrived late and missed the administration of the questionnaire prior to the start of the workshop. These parents completed only the questionnaire at the end of the workshop. Their scores on the knowledge section served as a control for pre-test sensitization, that is, the degree to which performance on the post-workshop questionnaire could be a result of prior exposure to the knowledge items. The mean number of knowledge questions answered correctly by the 14 parents completing only the post-workshop questionnaire was 8.29, a figure not statistically different from the 8.37 items completed correctly on the average by parents taking both the pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires. Improvement in performance on the knowledge section of the questionnaire, therefore, cannot be attributed to pre-test sensitization.

Long-Term Effects of Workshop Participation and Knowledge

Experimental, Contrast and Motivation parents answered the 15 factual questions for a final time on the questionnaire completed in May 1984. Data from all administration of the knowledge section of the questionnaires are included in Table 14.

TABLE 14

Average Number of Correct Responses to Knowledge Questions on All Administrations of the Questionnaire.

	Experimental	Contrast	Motivation
Pre-workshop	3.68	2.42	3.06
Post-workshop	8.37	-	-
May	6.34	2.73	2.73

There was a significant difference between (p=.000) the Experimental and Contrast groups in their knowledge scores on the May questionnaire. For the Experimental group, the number of items answered correctly on the May questionnaire was significantly (p=.000) less than the number answered correctly immediately after the workshop, but was still significantly greater (p=.000) than the number answered correctly before the workshop. Over the same period of time, Contrast parents showed little change in their ability to answer the knowledge questions correctly; completion of the initial questionnaire apparently did not serve as an intervention for Contrast parents. That the difference in performance between the Experimental and Contrast groups on the May questionnaire could be due to differential motivation between the two groups can be largely discounted by reference to the score for the Motivation group in May.

It was hypothesized that any gain in knowledge evidenced by the Experimental parents in May might not be a function of learning and retention, but of their having available written materials received at the workshop which they could study or from which answers to the questionnaire items could be drawn. Therefore, a Materials group was provided the packet of workshop materials several months in advance of their completing the May questionnaire. The average number of knowledge items answered correctly by Materials parents was 1.73. It seems reasonably clear that access to written materials did not itself account for the significantly greater number of knowledge questions answered correctly by Experimental parents than by Contrast parents on the May questionnaire. Therefore, PACER workshop participation appears to have had a significant immediate and long-term effect in increasing attendees' knowledge of the special education laws.

Behavior

Two questions were of primary interest in gathering frequency data from Experimental and Contrast parents on their involvement in the special education process: 1) was there a difference in the nature and extent of involvement between parents who came to the PACER workshop and parents who did not? and 2) after attendance at a PACER workshop was there a change in level of involvement by Experimental parents in the special educaton process? The first question is addressed in discussion of data from the initial questionnaires, and the second, in analysis of data from the May questionnaires.

Behavior questions contained in the initial and May questionnaires were the same, and addressed parents' involvement in the assessment and IEP processes, their level of satisfaction with their child's special education program, and their communication with other parents of handicapped children (Appendix 1). Respondents were asked to base their answers to the initial fall questionnaire on the 1982-1983 school year, and to the May questionnaire, on the 1983-1984 school year.

Only those data provided by respondents for the oldest handicapped child in a family are used in summative and statistical calculations. Responses from Motivation parents are included for only those measures where differential motivation might be considered a cause of differences in responses between Experimental and Contrast parents.

Satisfaction Reported on Initial Questionnaire

Using a five point scale, parents indicated their overall level of satisfaction with their child's special education program during the 1982-1983 school year (Table 15). The mean level of satisfaction of Experimental parents as a group was significantly ($p=.005$) less than that of Contrast parents as a group. As is the case with responses on several items in the behavior section of the questionnaire, the difference between Experimental and Contrast parents in out-state areas was at a statistically significant level ($p=.008$), while that between metropolitan parents was not.

TABLE 15

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Level of Satisfaction and Mean Level of Satisfaction by Group.

	Extremely Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied	$\bar{X}$
Experimental	31%	16%	16%	23%	14%	2.74
Out-state	28%	14%	19%	22%	17%	2.86
Metropolitan	44%	22%	0%	28%	6%	2.29
Contrast	49%	12%	16%	18%	5%	2.17
Out-state	48%	13%	14%	30%	6%	2.23
Metropolitan	53%	11%	19%	14%	3%	2.03
Motivation	48%	21%	15%	9%	6%	2.03

For Experimental and Contrast groups, there was a signficant negative correla on (p=.002 and p=.017, respectively) between level of satisfaction and feeling ne in dealing with situations surrounding a child's handicap as indicated n the attitude section of the questionnaire. The lower the overall satisfaction indicated by parents, the greater was their feeling of isolation. Experimental parents indicated both significantly less overall satisfaction and significantly more isolation than Contrast parents.

Involvement in the IEP Reported on the Initial Questionnaire.

Table 16 presents data from all items concerning involvement in the IEP process that were contained in the behavior section of the questionnaire. The Experimental and Contrast groups were similiar in the average number of IEP meetings attended during the 1982-1983 school year: Experimental - 2.31, Contrast - 2.44.

TABLE 16

Percentage of Respondents by Group Marking Yes to Questions Concerning the IEP.

	Experimental	Contrast
Did you have a list of points you wanted to discuss that you brought with you to the IEP meeting?	67%	63%
Did you suggest any specific additions or changes be made in the IEP?	63%	49%
During the IEP meeting, did you ask that anything be explained more fully?	78%	73%
Did you bring the IEP home to examine it before deciding whether or not to approve it?	41%	31%
Were you dissatisfied with the content of the IEP you were asked to approve?	35%	16%
If yes to the above question, did you withhold approval of the IEP?	27%	14%
Did you keep records on any of the following?		
- child's progress in school	52%	65%
- child's progress at home	21%	28%
- test results	33%	42%
- conversations with the school about your child	29%	31%

There was only one statistically significant difference in the percentage of affirmative answers by Experimental and Contrast parents overall to questions concerning involvement in the IEP process: a greater ($p=.006$) percentage of the Experimental than of the Contrast group were dissatisfied with the content of the IEP. The difference between Experimental and Contrast parents in out-state areas on this measure was at statistically significant level ($p=.020$), while that between metropolitan parents was not.

Dissatisfaction with the content of the IEP was significantly correlated with a lower mean level of overall satisfaction with a child's special education program for both the Experimental ($p=.001$) and Contrast groups ($p=.001$). For Experimental parents, there was a significant positive correlation ($p=.047$) between having brought the IEP home for examination before signing it and having attended an earlier workshop, seminar, or conference on the special education laws.

Involvement in the Assessment Process Reported on the Initial Questionnaire

Responses to questions addressing parents' involvement in the assessment process are summarized in Table 17. There were no statistically significant differences in responses between the Experimental and Contrast groups overall. There was a significant difference ($p=.013$) between the percentage of Experimental and Contrast parents in out-state areas requesting assessment for a child.

TABLE 17

Percentage of Respondents by Group marking Yes to Questions Concerning Assessment.

	Experimental	Contrast
Was an assessment done of your child(ren?)	81%	92%
If yes to the above question, did you provide information that was included in the assessment?	71%	67%
If an assessment was done of your child did you meet with school staff before the IEP meeting for an explanation of the test results?	47%	50%
Did you think the test results accurately showed your child's strengths and weaknesses?	70%	83%
If no to the above question, did you request additional testing?	38%	30%
Were you uncomfortable with an assessment the school staff wanted to do?	22%	21%
If yes to above question, did you withhold permission for it to be done?	30%	20%
Did you initiate a request that an assessment of your child be done?	46%	34%
Did you have an outside assessment of your child done?	38%	27%

Mean level of overall satisfaction with a child's special education program was significantly and positively correlated with perceived accuracy of assessment for both Experimental (p=.002) and Coontrast (p=.002) groups that is, responses indicating test results had accurately reflected a child's strengths and weaknesses were correlated with higher mean levels of overall satisfaction. There was a significant negative correlation between mean overall satisfaction and having had an outside assessment done: both Experimental (p=.015) and Contrast (p=.018) parents who had had an outside assessment completed were less satisfied overall with the special education program than were parents who had not had such an assessment done.

Concerns with Progress and Programming Reported on the Initial Questionnaire

Two items dealt with respondents' concerns about a child's progress in school and one item, with respondents' requests for special education service not currently being offered a child. Summary data of responses to these questions are presented in Table 18.

TABLE 18

Percentage of Respondents Answering Yes to Questions Concerning Progress and Programming.

	Experimental	Contrast
Did you have any serious concerns about your child(ren)'s progress during the year?	60%	54%
If yes to above question, did you talk about them with anyone at school?	89%	98%
Did you ever request that your child(ren) receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?	41%	27%

A statistically greater percentage of Experimental than Contrast parents overall (p=.024) requested special education service not being offered their child. The difference between Experimental and Contrast parents in out-state areas on this measure was signficiant (p=.028) while that between Experimental and Contast parents in the metropolitan area was not. Concern with a child's progress in school was significantly correlated with a low mean level of overall satisfaction with the special education program for both Experimental (p=.001) and Contrast (p=.008) parents.

Inter-parent Interactions Reported on an Initial Questionnaire.

Four questions dealt with parents' behavior in relation to, or in conjunction with, parents of other handicapped children. Experimental parents talked to other parents about issues concerning their handicapped children an average of 3.19 times per month, while the average for Contrast parents was 1.02 times per month. There was a statisically significant difference on this measure between Experimental and Contrast groups overall (p=.000) and between the two groups in both out-state (p=.000) and metropolitan (p=.009) areas. Summary data of responses to the remaining items are contained in Table 19.

TABLE 19

Percentage of Respondents Marking Yes to Questions Concerning Inter-Parent Interactions.

	Experimental	Contrast
Did you provide information to any other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities	43%	16%
Did you accompany parents of other handicapped children to a school conference or to their child's IEP?	13%	3%
Are you currently a participant in any formal or inform	35%	7%

A significantly (p=.000) greater percentage of Experimental than Contrast parents provided information on the special education laws to other parents of handicapped children. This item was unique in the behavior section of the questionnaire in that it was the only item for which there was a significant difference (p=.011) between metropolitan and out-state respondents within the Experimental group: 50% of out-state Experimental parents provided other parents information on the law, while only 17% of metropolitan Experimental parents did so.

A significantly (p=.000) greater percentage of Experimental than Contrast parents overall were participants in formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children. The difference between Experimental and Contrast parents in out-state areas on this measure was significant (p=.000), while that between metropolitan Experimental and Contrast parents was not.

Data from the attitude, knowledge and behavior sections of the initial questionnaire indicate that parents who attended targeted PACER workshops dur ; the first four months of the 1983-1984 school year differed from parents who d not attend PACER workshops during this time in a number of ways. As defined by the measures used on the questionnaire, Experimental parents when compared with Contrast parents:

- felt more alone in situations dealing with their child's handicap(s)
- were more knowledgeable about the special education laws
- had a lower mean level of overall satisfaction with their child's 1982-1983 special education program
- were more likely to have been dissatisfied with the content of the IEP they were asked to approve during the 1982-1983 school year
- were more likely to have requested special education service not being offered their child
- were more likely to have provided information on the special education laws to other parents of handicapped children
- were more likely to have been a participant in a formal or informal group for parents of handicapped children
- talked with greater frequency with other parents about any issues concerning their handicapped children

Experimental parents living in out-state areas were more knowledgeable about the special education law and were more likely to provide information on the law to other parents of handicapped children than were their counterparts living in the metropolitan area. On all of these measures, Experimental parents and Contrast parents in out-state areas differed from each other at statistically significant levels.

May Questionnaire

In analyzing data from the behavioral section of the May questionnaire, the focus is on identifying changes associated with attendance at the PACER workshop in the nature and extent of involvement by Experimental parents in the special education process. Rather than presenting summary data of responses to all items contained in the behavior section of the questionnaire, only those data relevant to the question of changed parent involvement are included in the discussion.

Satisfaction Reported on May Questionnaire

Using a five point scale, respondents indicated their level of overall satisfaction with their child's special education program during the 1983-1984 school year. These data presented in Table 20. There was a significant ($p=.048$) increase in the mean level of satisfaction from that reported for the prior school year (1982-1983) by Experimental parents (2.74 on the initial questionnaire; 2.22 on the May questionnaire).

MAY TABLE 20

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Each Level of Satisfaction and Mean Level of Satisfaction by Group.

	Extremely Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied	$\bar{X}$
Experimental	42%	18%	18%	16%	6%	2.22
Out-state	40%	19%	22%	16%	37%	2.24
Metropolitan	48%	14%	5%	19%	14%	2.38
Contrast	50%	17%	20%	11%	2%	1.99
Out-state	56%	14%	20%	7%	3%	1.91
Metropolitan	36%	24%	20%	20%	0%	2.24
Motivation	60%	20%	5%	15%	0%	1.75

The mean level of overall satisfaction with the 1983-1984 special education programs of Experimental parents was still lower than that of Contrast parents, but on the May questionnaire there was no longer a statistically signficiant difference between the mean ratings as their had been on the initial questionnaire for the 1982-1983 special education programs. Motivation parents rated their children's programs higher than either the Experimental or Contrast groups on both the initial and May questionnaires, thereby largely eliminating differential motivation as a cause of different levels of overall satisfaction by Experimental and Contrast groups.

Involvement in IEP and Assessment Processes Reported on the May Questionnaire.

The Experimental group showed marginal changes in behavior between the initial and longitudinal questionnaires on a number of measures. These were indicated either by a statistically significant change across time in the Experimental group that did not result in a statistically signficicant difference between the Experimental and Contrast groups, or by a change across time in the Experimental group that was not statistically signficiant but resulted in the appearance or disappearance of a statistically significant difference between the Experimental and Contrast groups.

For Experimental parents, there were statistically significant increases from the initial to the May questionnaire in the number of IEP meetings attended (p=.044), and in the four listed areas of record keeping: progress in school (p=.000), progress at home (p=.048), test results (p=.001) and conversations with school staff about a child (p=.041). On only one of these measures - keeping records on test results - did the change across time in the Experimental group result in a statistically significant difference (p=.001) on the May questionnaire between the Experimental and Contast group. On another behavior urged by speakers at PACER workshops - bringing the IEP home to examine before signing - there was an increase, but not a significant one, from initial to May questionnaire percentages, resulting in a statistically signficiant difference (p=.058) on this measure between Experimental and Contrast parents on the May questionnaire.

There was a statistically significant decrease (p=.007) from the initial to the May questionnaire in the percentage of Experimental parents initiating a request for a school assessment. There was also a decrease, but not a significant one, in the percentage of Experimental parents dissatisfied with the content of the IEP. This change over time resulted in the elimination of the statistically significant difference between the Experimental and Contrast groups that existed on this measure on the initial questionnaire. There was a decrease, but not a signfiicant one, in the percentage of parents who thought assessment results accurately reflected a child's abilities. This change over time resulted in a statistically significant difference (p=.001) between the Experimental and Contrast groups on this measure on the May questionnaire.

Inter-Parent Interaction Reported on the May Questionnaires.

An increase in two behaviors not directly involving parent/school interaction was associated with attendance at the PACER workshop. Experimental parents provided special education information to other parents of handicapped children and participated in groups for parents of handicapped children in signficantly greater numbers than did Contrast parents before the workshop, and the difference between the Experimental and Contrast groups on these two measures increased subsequent to the workshop. The percentage of Experimental parents providing information on the special education law to other parents of handicapped children increased significantly from the initial to the May questionnaire (43% to 61%, p=.033); the percentage of Experimental parents participating in formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children increased though not significantly (35% to 49%, p=.058), from the initial to the May questionnaire.

On all of the discussed measures, responses from Motivation parents changed, or failed to change, in a sufficiently similiar manner to those of Contrast parents to challenge the hypothesis that differential motivation between Contrast and Experimental groups accounted for differences in their responses.

Feedback

Experimental parents provided feedback on the workhops they had attended. Contrast parents indicated why they had not attended a PACER workshop on special education laws and what, if any, effects completion of the initial questionnaire had had on their perceptions about the special education process.

Feedback from Experimental Parents

Experimental parents provided feedback on the PACER workshop immediately upon its completion and again in May, five to eight months after the date of the workshop. Table 21 contains summary data on purposes parents indicated for having gone to the workshop.

TABLE 21

Percentage of Experimental Parents Responding Yes to Each Reason for Attending a PACER Workshop.

	Overall	Out-state	Metropolitan
To gain information about educational rights of handicapped children	94%	95%	90%
To review recent changes in special education laws/ regulations	46%	49%	34%
To gain information in response to a specific problem at school	46%	51%	34%
To meet other parents of handicapped children	48%	57%	24%
To get support from others	34%	35%	31%

Both out-state and metropolitan respondents ranked information on special education rights highest and support from others lowest, with approximately the same percentage of parents from each group choosing the two stipulated purposes. Out-state parents showed more interest than metropolitan parents in the remaining three options, particularly in the purpose of meeting other parents of handicapped children ($p=.002$).

Eighty-nine percent of the parents felt that the right amount of material had been covered at the workshop. However, respondents from out-state areas differed significantly ($p=.000$) from parents in the metropolitan area in how much of the material they had known prior to the workshop.

	Out-state	Metropolitan
most of the material	15%	0%
about half of the material	53%	37%
hardly any of the material	32%	63%

All of the parents were in basic agreement about how well they liked specific portions of the workshop. Ranked in order of preference, the components were:

presentations by the speakers	98%
meeting other parents	84%
small group discussions	68%
role playing	42%

With the experiences of a school year to influence their responses, parents indicated on the May questionnaire those workshop topics on which they had needed more information. The topics and the percentage of respondents indicating each are listed below.

history of the special education laws	8%
rights guaranteed by the special education laws	34%
assessment	31%
IEP	28%
conciliation conferences; due process hearings; complaint procedures	16%
techniques for communicating with school staff	31%

Forty-three percent of the respondents indicated that the workshop made them aware of issues that needed to be discussed with school staff. Seven percent stated that subsequent to the workshop they contacted PACER for written information, while 16% phoned PACER once for specific answers to questions and 9% phoned PACER several times to discuss at length concerns about their child's education. Ten percent of the parents contacted another parent organization about their child's education program subsequent to the workshop, and 66% of the respondents made no contact with any parent organization for further information.

Experimental parents were given a folder of written information on the special education laws at the PACER workshop. Thirty-eight percent had used them to address a specific concern about their child's special education, while 28% had referred to them to provide information about the laws to another parent or to a professional. Forty-two percent of the respondents on the May questionnaire indicated they had not referred to the materials subsequent to the workshop.

Feedback from Contrast Parents

On the initial questionnaire, Contrast parents were asked if they had been aware of the upcoming PACER workshop in their local area, from what source they had gained the information and for what reasons they had chosen not to attend.

Regardless of out-state or metropolitan location, approximately 44% of the Contrast parents had been aware of the upcoming workshop. Nine percent of these had learned of it from a friend, 20% from a newspaper ad, and 72% from school personnel. The reasons most frequently selected by all respondents for not having attended the workshop involved difficulties in scheduling time, in arranging child care or transportation, and in marshalling the energy or money (gas, babysitting) necessary for attendance. The two other frequently selected reasons for having chosen not to attend the PACER workshop were trust in the school personnel to know and do what is required by law, and lack of clear enough information on what was going to be covered in the workshop.

On the May questionnaire, Contrast parents were asked if completion of the initial questionnaire had affected their perception of their child's special education program or of the adequacy of their knowledge of the special education laws. Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that in filling out the initial questionnaire they had become aware of issues that needed to be discussed with school staff and forty-three percent said that completing the initial questionnaire had resulted in their becoming aware of a need for further information to deal with their child's education.

Subsequent to completing the initial questionnaire, 2% of the Contrast respondents contacted PACER for written information on the laws and 7% phoned PACER once to receive answers to specific questions. Two percent of the respondents contacted another parent organization regarding their child's special education program, and 86% made no contact with any parent organization.

Needs Assessment - Experimental and Contrast Groups

Respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale how important a variety of potential resources would be in meeting their current needs. Experimental parents rated all 29 items more important, though not at a statistically signficant level, than did Contrast parents. Figure 1 presents the items in descending order of importance as indicated by mean level of response for Experimental parents. Mean level of importance was calculated using responses from only the first five response categories. As will be reported in Study 2 of this evaluation, needs assessment data were also collected from parents who had attended PACER workshops on the special education laws in 1982-1983. These three groups of respondents - parents who attended PACER special education workshops in 1982-1983 and the Experimental and Contrast parents within this Study - ranked the same potential resources, in different order, in the first six positions of importance. The needs assessment did not contain a category related to basic information on special education rights and responsibilities since this topic is covered in PACER's workshops, and the parents had indicated the importance of this by attending a PACER workshop.

FIGURE 1

Mean Level of Importance of Potential Resources in Meeting Needs of Experimental Parents.

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I Am Not Familiar With This Topic
increased sensitivity of nonhandicapped students to the feelings and needs of handicapped students	1	2	3 1.27	4	5	6
information about your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3 1.55	4	5	6
information on how parents can promote effective service for handicapped students in the least restrictive educational setting	1	2	3 1.60	4	5	6
opportunities for school staff to learn more about the nature of your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3 1.64	4	5	6
information for school staff on methods of increasing professional openness to involvement by parents in education	1	2	3 1.65	4	5	6
information on stress in families with a handicapped child and methods for dealing with it	1	2	3 1.69	4	5	6
family training: methods of teaching, modifying behavior, managing physical disabilities	1	2	3 1.76	4	5	6
opportunities for school staff to learn more about the emotional needs of parents having a handicapped child	1	2	3 1.77	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I Am Not Familiar With This Topic
training in effective communication skills	1	2	3 1.91	4	5	6
research results on the educational effectiveness of various teaching techniques and classroom environments	1	2	3 1.97	4	5	6
information on early planning for your child's years after his/her completion of school	1	2	3 1.99	4	5	6
information on available elementary school programs	1	2	3 2.00	4	5	6
in-depth information on assessment procedures and instruments used in schools	1	2	3 2.03	4	5	6
in-depth information on planning and writing an IEP	1	2	3 2.05	4	5	6
information on the impact of minimum competency testing on special education students	1	2	3 2.08	4	5	6
information on the use of computers in special education	1	2	3 2.11	4	5	6
advocacy training in seeking services for your child	1	2	3 2.14	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Importa	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I Am Not Familiar With This Topic
information on how parents can encourage the creation of a greater number and variety of work settings, living arrangements, and continuing education options for handicapped young adults after they have completed their school years	1	2	3 2.17	4	5	6
information on the special vulnerability of handicapped persons to sexual abuse	1	2	3 2.19	4	5	6
regular meetings with parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3 2.19	4	5	6
information on community resources: medical personnel skilled in dealing with handicapped children, in-home child care, out of home child care, etc.	1	2	3 2.22	4	5	6
information comparing the benefits of teaching academic skills versus independent living and vocational skills in school	1	2	3 2.24	4	5	6
information on available secondary school programs	1	2	3 2.27	4	5	6
aid with the shock, anger, denial, acceptance surrounding your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3 2.36	4	5	6
information on the preparation of a will providing care for your handicapped child in case of your death	1	2	3 2.48	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I Am Not Famili With This Topic
in-depth information on conciliation conferences, due process hearings, and complaint procedures	1	2	3 2.50	4	5	6
information on the nature and use of drugs in the management of some disabilities	1	2	3 2.82	4	5	6
information on the differences in systems between preschool and elementary school	1	2	3 2.99	4	5	6
information on available preschool programs	1	2	3 3.07	4	5	6

DISCUSSION

This component of the PACER evaluation project gathered information on a number of topics considered important to the assessment of PACER's current program and to the development of future PACER activities. These are briefly discussed under the subheadings below.

Characteristics of Participating Parents.

In some respects the parents who participated in the PACER workshops (Experimental group) were similiar to the sample of parents who did not attend workshops (Contrast group). The average age of respondents in the two groups was similiar (37.1 versus 36.3 years.) The average number of children per family was statistically equal (3.1) as was the average number of handicapped children per family (1.25). However, important differences also existed between mothers/females in households included with the sample of workshop participants and mothers/females in households of non-participants, particularly in out-state areas. It is appropriate to focus on data for mothers/females as women are preponderant among participants at PACER workshops.

Women in the Experimental group had significantly more formal education than women with the Contrast group, and they had assessed sources of information on the special education laws to a greater degree than women with the Contrast group. Women in the Experimental group were much more likely to be full-time homemakers (59% than women in the Contrast group (43%), and they were also much more likely to be from intact families (88% versus 75%).

Characteristics of Participating Parents' Children.

No statistically significant differences existed between the participating parents and the Contrast group in the ages of their children (10.0 versus 10.4 years) the sex of their children (77% male versus 70% male), or the length of time their children had been in special education. Other important differences were found. Participating parents generally had children with more serious primary disabilities.

Observations Regarding Characteristics.

Parents and their children would be benefited if PACER addressed the demographic differences of parents currently attending and not attending PACER workshops by exploring various methods of reaching other parents who do not attend PACER workshops. Many alternatives are possible, one is mentioned here by way of example. As part of one component of this research, Contrast parents were asked to complete a questionnaire to test their knowledge of special education laws. Twenty percent of the parents completing the questionnaire indicated that it had led them to an awareness of issues they wanted to discuss with school personnel; 43% indicated that completing the questionnaire made them aware of issues about which they felt they needed further information. Indeed after completing the questionnaire, 12% of the Contrast group contacted either PACER or another parent organization for information.

If such a questionnaire, perhaps in the format of a pamphlet, entitled "How much do you know about your rights and responsibilities as a parent of a handicapped child?," were mailed to the approximately 62,400 households in Minnesota with one or more handicapped child, it could well stimulate 6,000 - 7,000 requests for information and/or assistance from parent groups.

Perhaps more importantly it would make knowledge of technical/informational and supportive services available for persons who are relatively less likely, for any number of personal or familial reasons, to attend workshops. This is but one of a number of alternatives PACER should explore to improve the balance of persons assessing information through its program.

The fact that the people that come to workshops are already much more knowledgeable about special education laws than the Contrast group and that about half are already providing information about special education laws to other parents, are accompanying other parents to IEP meetings and/or are members of other parent groups raises issues whether a more proactive approach to attracting relatively novice participants is not warranted, particularly given the strong treatment effects that the PACER program demonstrated in this evaluation.

Short-Term Effects of PACER Workshops.

This research demonstrated that participation in PACER workshops significantly increased the level of knowledge about special education laws. This finding takes on somewhat more signficance when it is noted that 94% of the parents attending PACER workshops indicated that they were attending "to gain information about the educational rights of handicapped children." While, a decade after the passage of Public Law 94-142, this topic may seem passe to some, it clearly is not to the attendees of PACER workshops. While the difference in the number of

correct responses on a standard questionnaire of 15 items regarding special education law increased substantially between pre-workshop and post-workshop (from an average of 3.7 to 8.4 correct), the performance at post-test leaves some reason to consider alternatives in instruction. It is also recommended that the assessment instrument itself be modified to capture, less detail and more conceptual change among respondents.

Long-Term Effects of PACER workshops.

While it is important to gather information on PACER workshops' success in transmitting information about special education laws and regulations and on the long-term retention of this information (also demonstrated in this research evaluation), it is the assumption that this knowledge leads to changes in the way parents perceive and act upon their rights and responsibilties on which justification for programs such as PACER's must ultimately be made. Therefore, a major emphasis in this evaluation was placed on the long-term modification of attitudes, and behavior among attendees and Contrast groups.

The findings of this follow-up study (from Fall 1983 to May 1984) showed a consistent increase in positive attitudes and behavior in academic year 1983-1984 among those parents who attended a PACER workshop early in the year. No such change was found among the Contrast group. Parents attending PACER workshops increased substantially in their satisfaction with their child's program, in their participation in their child's IEP planning meetings, in maintaining school related records on their children, and in their level of involvement with other parents of handicapped children.

Not only did PACER participants appear to benefit individually in many areas of attitude and behavior, a remarkable 61% indicated that they had provided information to other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities. Obviously the effects of this program stretch, in a nonqualifiable way, substantially beyond those who are directly taught by it.

What Issues Should PACER be Addressing?

In addition to the summative evaluation data, parents were asked to provide ratings of the importance of potential PACER topics to their current needs to help guide the future development of the PACER program. By far, the most highly rated of these topics regarded "increasing the sensitivity of non-handicapped students to the feelings and needs of handicapped students." This is, of course, an issue that PACER has been approaching directly for several years through its "COUNT ME IN" project. Parents also expressed a good deal of interest in knowing more about their child's handicap. This may suggest beneficial possibilties for PACER to approach schools about cooperating on information sessions that focus on a particular disability. It might also suggest a need to develop materials written for parents on specific disabilities that provide a brief overview and direct parents to other readings in specific areas of interest to parents.

A third area of particular interest to parents was in facilitating cooperation between school staff and families in pursuing the academic and social progress and integration of handicapped students. PACER has begun efforts in this area through its communication training, but parents stress a number of specific school related needs above that of developing general communication needs.

Perhaps better definition of these issues and the development of related programs should be considered. A final topic highly recommended by parents regarded information and assistance in dealing with general stresses and specific problems of behavioral and physical management associated with raising a handicapped child. Should PACER seek to amplify its program or to increase its impact through diversification of its curriculum, these are the topics about which parents seem most receptive.

STUDY 2

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, PACER has gathered feedback on its workshops immediately subsequent to their completion and, from a sample of participants, on a follow-up basis at the end of each school year. However, no in-depth retrospective data from a large number of workshop participants had ever been gathered by PACER regarding its workshops on special education rights. The importance of these data lie in the information they provide PACER for program modification and development, and in the feedback they provide funding agenies for decisions regarding resource allocation.

In Study 2, parents of handicapped children who had attended PACER's Levels II and III workshops on special education laws during the prior (1982-1983) school year were surveyed to gather four types of data: 1) demographic information; 2) data on attitudes toward, level of knowledge of, and behavioral involvement in the special education process; 3) feedback on the usefulness and comprehensiveness of materials and information provided at the workshop; 4) needs assessment data.

METHOD

Instrument

Demographic items on the questionnaire as well as those measuring attitudes toward the special education laws, knowledge of the laws, and the nature and degree of behavioral involvement in the special education process were taken from the questionnaire given to 1983-1984 workshop participants in Study 1 (Appendix 1.) These items, along with those eliciting feedback on the workshop and those contained in the needs assessment section, were reviewed by the co-directors of PACER and the University of Minnesota consultant who had been involved in the preparation of the research grant. The instrument was changed to reflect these reviewers' comments, and was sent for written feedback to three members of the research advisory board who, as parents of handicapped children, had attended PACER workshops on the special education laws. Three additional prior workshop participants read and answered the instrument's questions orally in a one-to-one situation with the researh coordinator. The final form of the questionnaire reflected feedback from these six parent reviewers (Appendix 2.)

Subjects

Names of parents to be included in Study 2 were selected from information forms completed by participants at the conclusion of Level II and Level III workshops conducted by PACER throughout Minnesota during th 1982-1983 fiscal year. Only parents attending Level II and Level III workshops that discussed the special education laws and that were of approximately three hours in length were included in this study. Names of workshop participants were randomly selected from information forms sorted according to location of workshop, age of attendee's child, and level of workshop.

Procedure

Questionnaires were mailed to 245 workshop participants, of which half went to parents in the metropolitan area and half to parents in out-state areas. Eighty percent of the parents had attended Level II workshops, and 20%, Level III. Children within the ages of 0-4, 5-11, and 12-18 years were represented in both the metropolitan and out-state regions. Subjects were divided into three mailing groups according to the date they had attended the PACER workshop in 1982-1983 and members of each group were mailed the questionnaire 13-16 months subsequent to their workshop attendance. The date of the workshop each participant had attended was printed on the front of the questionnaire. Included with the survey was a letter briefly describing the purpose of the study and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Follow-up phone calls were made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

RESULTS

A total of 138 questionnaires (56%) were returned. Seventy-six out-state parents (62%) completed the survey, while only 62 parents in the metropolitan area (50%) returned the questionnaire. Eighty percent of those completing the survey had attended a PACER Level II workshop, and 20%, a Level III workshop.

Characteristics

The majority of the respondents (57%) were in the 31-40 year age range, and 87% of the households represented in the survey had two adults present. Forty-three percent of the females/mothers from these households had full or part-time work outside the home, and 48% of the respondents placed their families at the middle income level wih 33% below this point (12% low; 21% low middle) and 17% above (14% upper middle; 3% high). Fifty-two percent of the females/mothers and 44% of the males/fathers from surveyed households had attended, though not necessarily completed graduate school and/or college. The average level of formal education of females/ mothers in the metopolitan area was significantly higher (p=.004) than that of females/mothers in out-state areas.

Forty-eight percent of the respondents had one or two children, 37% had three or four, and 14% had five or more. There was one handicapped child within 80% of the households, two within 14% of the homes, three within 3%, and four within 1% of the families.

Respondents were asked to indicate the age and handicapping condition(s) of each of their handicapped children. Definitions of Minnesota's special education service levels (Appendix B) were printed in the survey to aid respondents in reporting the level of special education at which their child(ren) had been served during the period from the date of the respondent's attendance at the listed PACER workshop to the date of completion of the questionnaire. Summary descriptive data are contained in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Category of Disability, Age Range, and Level/Type of Special Education Service for the Oldest Handicapped Child within a Family.

Disability		Age		Level/type of special education	
visual impairment	9%	0-3	8%	Level I	5%
hearing impairment	10%	4-6	36%	Level II	1%
speech impairment	36%	7-10	25%	Level III	23%
cerebral palsy/spina bifida/other physical handicaps	27%	11-15	16%	Level IV	14%
		16-20	11%	Level V	17%
epilepsy/diabetes/ heart/asthma/other health disorders	12%	over 20	2%	Level VI	3%
		(blank)	2%	special pre-school or DAC	27%
developmental delay (4 years old & under)	17%			no special education	6%
learning disability	41%			not sure	1%
mental retardation	33%			(blank)	3%
behavior problem	12%				
emotional disturbance	7%				
autism	3%				

Subsequent to attendance at the PACER workshop listed on the front of their questionnaires, 10 respondents (7%) participated in an additional PACER workshop and 18 (13%) attended a workshop/seminar/conference on the special education laws given by an organization other than PACER. Table 2 lists additional resources from which respondents indicated they had gained information on the educational rights of handicapped children subsequent to attendance at the PACER workshop listed on the front of their questionnaire. Metropolitan respondents had contacted PACER by phone in signficantly greater numbers ($p=.024$) than had out-state respondents.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Resource as a Source of Information on Handicapped Children's Educational Rights.

school personnel	33%
parents of other handicapped children	25%
PACER newsletter	65%
newsletter from another parent organization or disability group	23%
literature on special education laws from PACER Center	23%
literature on special education rights from another parent organization or disability group	14%
phone contact with PACER Center	19%
phone contact with another parent organization or disability group	8%

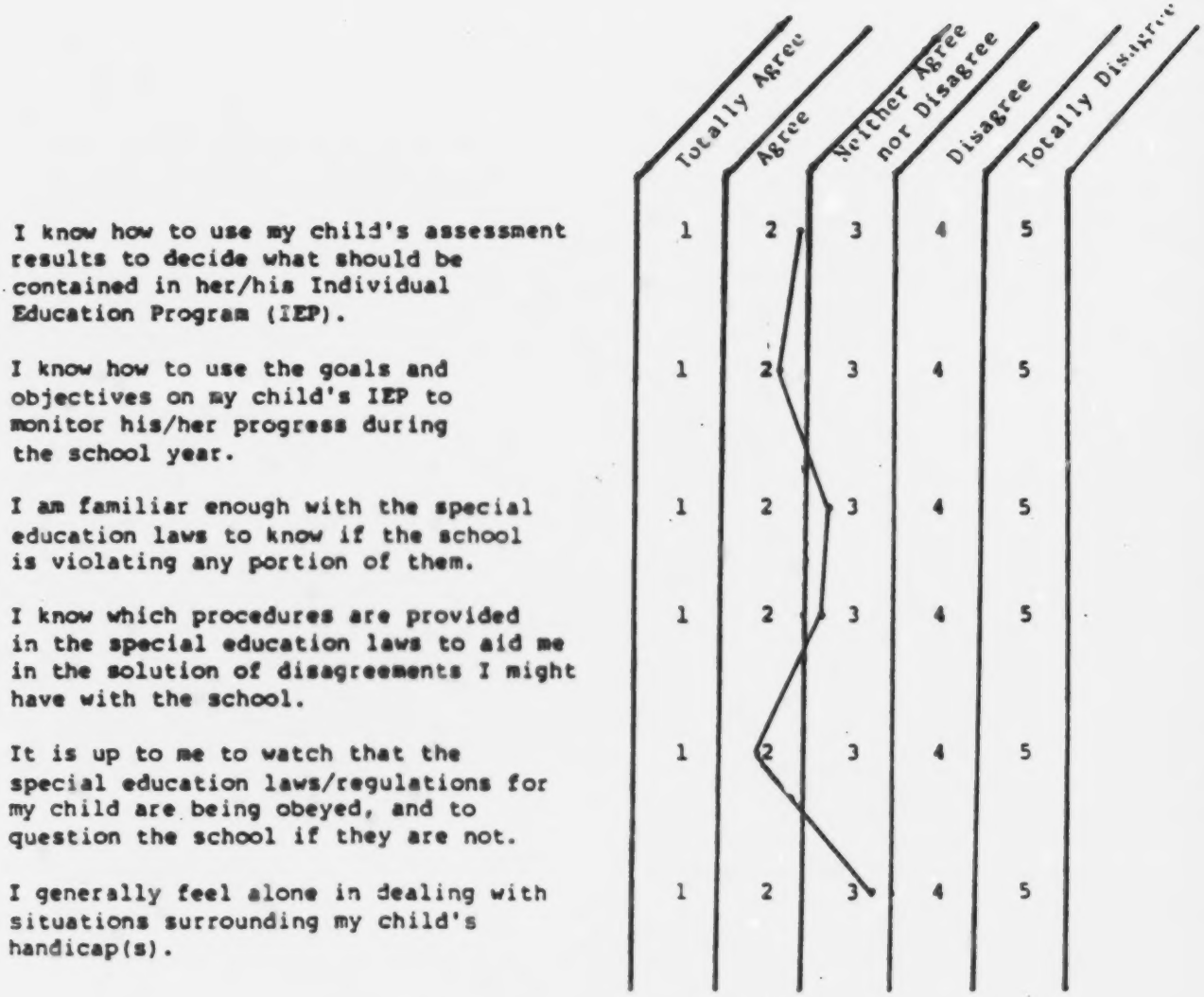
Attitudes

Using a five point scale, respondents rated their agreement with six statements concerning special education and the feelings surrounding having a handicapped child. Four of the items were knowledge related, asking respondents to express their confidence in using the provisions of the special education laws to achieve specific ends within their child's special education program. A fifth item focused on the perceived necessity by parents of monitoring the school's provisions of mandated services and procedures for their child. The final item concerned the degree of isolation experienced by respondents in dealing with situations surrounding their child's handicapping condition.

Mean level of agreement with each of the five statements is shown in Figure 1. Respondents generally indicated only modest confidence in their ability to use various provisions of the special education laws to benefit their child's education. Despite this, respondents felt it was the parent's responsibility to monitor a school's compliance with the law. Mean level of agreement with the item expressing the necessity for a parent to monitor school compliance on special education laws statistically exceeded ($p=.000$) mean level of agreement with the item claiming sufficient familiarity with the laws to know if they are being violated.

Figure 1

Mean Level of Agreement with Attitude Statements.


Totally Agree
Agree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Disagree
Totally Disagree
I know how to use my child's assessment results to decide what should be contained in her/his Individual Education Program (IEP).
I know how to use the goals and objectives on my child's IEP to monitor his/her progress during the school year.
I am familiar enough with the special education laws to know if the school is violating any portion of them.
I know which procedures are provided in the special education laws to aid me in the solution of disagreements I might have with the school.
It is up to me to watch that the special education laws/regulations for my child are being obeyed, and to question the school if they are not.
I generally feel alone in dealing with situations surrounding my child's handicap(s).
1
2
3
4
5

Knowledge

The knowledge section of the questionnaire consisted of eight items reviewing provisions of the special education laws and regulations concerning the written IEP, the IEP process, the assessment procedure, due process proceedings, and the parameters defining mandated special education service.

The mean number of knowledge items answered correctly was 3.26 out of a possible 8; 25% of the respondents completed more than half of the items correctly. One question was remarkable in the relatively high percentage (82%) of respondents selecting the correct answer.

> A handicapped child's right to free special education depends on the school district's having sufficient money to provide appropriate programs for the child.

Aside from this item, the percentage of respondents answering any question correctly ranged between 3% and 51%.

For out-state respondents, there was a significant positive correlation ($p=.002$) between the number of knowledge items answered correctly and the level of school last attended by the female/mother. For metropolitan respondents, there was a signficant positive correlation between the number of knowledge items answered correctly and responses indicating specific resources as having been sources of information on the educational rights of handicapped children: PACER newsletter ($p=.001$); newsletter from another parent organization or disability group ($p=.001$); literature on special education laws from PACER Center ($p=.009$); phone contact with PACER Center ($p=.037$); and workshops/seminars/conferences on special education laws attended subsequent to the PACER workshop listed on the cover of the respondent's questionnaire ($p=.001$.)

There was a significant correlation for both out-state ($p=.001$) and metropolitan ($p=.020$) respondents between the number of knowledge items answered correctly and combined mean level of agreement with the four items on the attitude section of the questionnaire expressing ability to use the law to further a child's special education. That is, the greater the agreement with statements indicating ability to use the special education law to promote a child's education, the better the actual performance in answering factual questions about the law's provisions.

Behavior

The behavior section of the questionnaire focused on the respondent's satisfaction with his/her child's special education program, on the degree of the respondent's involvement in the IEP and assessment processes, and on the nature of the respondent's interactions with other parents of handicapped children. Responses to the questions were to be based on the 13-16 month period from the date of the respondent's attendance at the PACER workshop listed on the cover of the questionnaire to the date of his/her completion of the survey. All data calculations are based on responses for the oldest handicapped child within a family.

Overall Satisfaction

Using a five point scale, respondents rated their overall level of satisfaction with their child's special education program. Respondents from out-state regions tended to be somewhat more satisfied than respondents living within the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area (Table 3).

TABLE 3

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Level of Satisfaction with a Child's Special Education Program.

	out-state	metropolitan
extremely satisfied	47%	33%
somewhat satisfied	21%	28%
satisfied	15%	17%
somewhat dissatisfied	15%	18%
extremely dissatisfied	3%	3%
	$\bar{x}$ = 1.97	$\bar{x}$ = 2.22

During the period from the date of workshop attendance to the date of completion of the survey, 33% of the respondents requested that their child receive special education service the school was not offering. For both metropolitan (p=.015) and out-state (p=.001) respondents, there was a significant correlation between having made such a request for service and a lower mean level of overall satisfaction with a child's special education program.

Involvement in the IEP Process

Respondents attended an average of 3.19 meetings to prepare or review the IEP during the period of reference (13-16 months) for the questionnaire. Table 4 contains summary data for responses to the remaining items on the survey concerning the IEP. The number of out-state respondents who brought the IEP home before signing it was significantly greater (p=.018) than the number of metropolitan respondents who did so.

TABLE 4

Percentage of Respondents Answering Yes to Questions Concerning the IEP.

Did you suggest that any specific additions or change be made in the IEP?	58%
Did you bring the IEP home to examine it before deciding whether or not to approve it?	31%
Were you dissatisfied with the content of the IEP you were asked to approve?	15%
If yes to the question above, did you withhold approval of the IEP?	37%
If the school staff did an assessment of your child during this period, did you meet with them before the IEP meeting for an explanation of the test results?	33%

For metropolitan respondents, there was a significant correlation (p=.018) between not having brought the IEP home and a lower mean level of overall satisfaction with a child's special education program. For out-state respondents, a lower mean level of overall satisfaction was signficantly correlated (p=.007) with dissatisfaction with the content of the IEP.

Involvement in the Assessment Process

Table 5 contains summary data for responses to questions concerning the assessment process. Responses to some items were significantly correlated with the respondents' overall level of satisfaction with a child's special education program.

TABLE 5

Percentage of Respondents Answering Yes to Questions Concerning Assessment.

During this period, if the school staff did an assessment, did you think the test results accurately showed your child's strengths and weaknesses?	62%
If no to the question above, did you request additional testing?	39%
Did you withhold permission for your school staff to do an assessment?	1%
Did you initiate a request that an assessment of your child be done by the school staff during this period?	27%
Did you have an outside assessment of your child done during this period?	22%

For metropolitan respondents, there was a significant (p=.019) correlation between having considered assessment results an accurate reflection of a child's abilities and a higher mean level of satisfaction with a child's special education program. For both metropolitan (p=.003) and out-state (p=.001) respondents, there was a significant correlation between having initiated a request for a school assessment and a lower mean level of overall satisfaction with a child's program.

Parent Interactions

The survey contained a series of questions concerning the respondent's interactions with other parents of handicapped children. Forty-eight percent of the respondents were currently participating in formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children and respondents talked with other parents of disabled children an average of 2.52 times per month about issues concerning their handicapped children. During the period referenced by the questionnaire, 58% of the respondents provided information on special education rights and responsibilities to other parents of handicapped children, and 9% accompanied parents to a school conference or a child's IEP meeting.

Workshop Feedback

The survey sought various types of information related to the PACER workshop the respondent had attended. Questions addressed the respondent's purpose in having

participated in the workshop, the extent to which the workshop had met the respondent's needs, subsequent usefulness of printed material distributed at the workshop, and possible effects of the workshop on the respondent's attitudes and behaviors regarding his/her child's special education program.

Table 6 lists summary data on purposes for attendance at the PACER workshop. Nine percent of the respondents listed reasons for attendance other than those provided among the response options. These included receipt of information in the following areas:

- the availability of employment and social security assistance for a handicapped young adult upon completion of high school
- the operation of the public school system and methods of "cutting through the red tape"
- resource groups, and educational and testing agencies available to provide information about a child's handicaps
- methods of supporting special education laws in danger of being changed
- the nature of activities of PACER Center itself.

TABLE 6

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Purpose for Attendance at the PACER Workshop.

To gain information about the educational rights of handicapped children.	89%
To review recent changes in special education laws/ regulations.	59%
To gain information in response to a speific problem at school.	30%
To meet other parents of handicapped children.	30%
To get support from others	23%
Other	9%

Table 7 lists agenda topics of the PACER workshops included in this substudy and the percentage of respondents who indicated a need to have received more information than was provided during the presentations. Sixty-five percent of the respondents expressed a desire to have received more information on one or more of the workshop topics.

TABLE 7

Percentage of Respondents Indicating a Need to Have Received More Information on Each Workshop Topic.

history of the special education laws	4%
rights guaranteed by special education laws	32%
assessment	21%
IEP (individual Education Program)	22%
conciliation conference; due process hearings; complaint procedures	19%
techniques for communicating with school staff	29%

Respondents were asked for opinions on information, other than that provided at the PACER workshop; they thought it important for parents to know how to assist their handicapped child to receive a good education. Forty-six percent of the respondents answered this item in some manner. The most frequently given suggestion concerned the functional value of associating with other parents of handicapped children for emotional support and feedback, and the desirability for a workshop such as PACER's to facilitate such contact by providing the names of existing support groups in each local area. Other suggestions that were offered multiple times included:

- clarification of districts' responsibilities in the face of insufficient funds, explanations of methods for responding to budget cuts, and strategies for addressing restrictive eligibility criteria and lack of programming options.
- description of the structure, lines of authority, and decision making process in school districts and special eucation cooperatives
- an index of educational programs and services within and across school districts, special education cooperatives, and states

- clarification of rules controlling placement, permanency, and transferability of materials in school files

- descriptions of educational programs appropriate for different disabilities, and the comparability of different educational programs in meeting the teaching needs of specific disabilities

- in-depth explanation of assessment instruments and procedures, and clarification of the rules governing provision of assessment

- a listing of local resources for assistance in the provision of special education programming and for information on determining the quality of special education programming

- descriptions of vocation education programs, job training programs, and recreation programs available for handicapped children and young adults locally and throughout the state

Participants in PACER workshops on special education laws receive a folder of materials reviewing and elaborating information presented by speakers during the workshop. Table 8 summarizes responses describing the use respondents made of these materials subsequent to the workshop. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents had referred to the materials for one purpose or another.

TABLE 8

Percentage of Respondents Selecting Each Statement Describing Use of Workshop Materials.

no, I have not referred to the materials since the workshop	22%
yes, to provide myself with general information about special education issues	59%
yes, to address a specific concern about my child's special education	35%
yes, to provide information about special education laws to another parent or to a professional	30%
yes, to find PACER's phone number	21%
yes, for other reasons	7%
yes, but the materials did not contain the information I needed	3%

The final questions in the workshop feedback section of the survey addressed the effects, if any, respondents perceived the workshop to have had on attitudes and behavior concerning their child's handicapping condition and special education program. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that as a result of information presented at the workshop, they became more aware of issues that needed to be discussed with school staff, while 32% said there were no issues about their child's educational program that needed to be addressed. Twenty-four percent of the respondents reported the workshop did not result in their deciding to talk with school staff because they had already been aware before attending the workshop of issues that needed to be addressed.

Using a five point scale, respondents rated the importance of the workshop in changing nine attitudes and dispositions. Ratings by out-state and metropolitan respondents were very similar except on two items. Out-state respondents rated the workshops as significantly more important than metropolitan respondents in changing their awareness that concerns about a child's education are shared by parents of other handicapped children ($p=.046$) and in changing their comfortableness in discussing concerns about a handicapped child and his/her education with others ($p=.012$). Figure 2 presents the nine items arranged in decreasing order of rated importance as determined by the mean response for respondents as a whole. The percentage of respondents choosing a sixth response option - 'I came to the workshop comfortable in this area' - is printed for each item in the appropriate column; this response choice was not included in calculating response means.

Mean Ratings for Importance of Workshop in Changing Attitudes/Dispositions.

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I Came to the Workshop Comfortable in this Area
awareness that my child and I have rights guaranteed by the special education laws that cannot be taken away	1	2	3	4	5	6 8%
awareness of the importance of being actively involved in planning my child's school program	1	2	3	4	5	6 12%
awareness of my right to monitor the quality of my child's school program	1	2	3	4	5	6 8%
comfortableness in asking questions about decisions made by school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6 10%
awareness of the importance of gathering my information and thoughts on my child's performance and needs before going into an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6 8%
determination to discuss my concerns about my child's program with school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6 7%
awareness of the procedures available within special education laws to aid me in resolving disagreements with school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6 4%
awareness that my concerns about my child's education are shared by parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6 12%
comfortableness in discussing my concerns about my handicapped child and his/her education with others	1	2	3	4	5	6 12%

Using a five point scale, respondents rated the amount of change that had occurred in the frequency with which they engaged in 14 school related activities since their attendance at the PACER workshop. Responses by out-state and metropolitan respondents were extremely similar for all items. Figure 3 presents the activities arranged in decreasing order of rated change in frequency as determined by the mean response for respondents as a whole.

FIGURE 3

Mean Ratings for Change in Frequency of School Related Activities.

	Much More Often	Slightly More Often	Same as Before the Workshop	Slightly Less Often	Much Less Often
contacting the teacher about my child's progress in school	1	2	3	4	5
going to IEP meetings with ideas about what I want in my child's education program	1	2	3	4	5
closely following my child's progress in school and at home	1	2	3	4	5
contacting the teacher about my observations of my child at home	1	2	3	4	5
working with my child at home on school related activities	1	2	3	4	5
requesting copies of assessments, etc. from the school file	1	2	3	4	5
keeping written records on school related matters	1	2	3	4	5
reviewing my child's school file	1	2	3	4	5
visiting my child's classroom	1	2	3	4	5

	Much More Often	Slightly More Often	Same as Before the Workshop	Slightly Less Often	Much Less Often
seeking professional services for my handicapped child outside the school system	1	2	3	4	5
making contact with parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5
attending school board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
attending IEP meetings	1	2	3	4	5
taking another person with me when I go to IEP meetings	1	2	3	4	5

Needs Assessment

The final portion of the survey consisted of three questions listing potential services and asking respondents to rate them on a five point scale for importance in meeting their current needs. The first item within this section contained 29 specific services and was intended to be answered by all respondents. Figure 4 presents the services ranked in decreasing order of rated importance as determined by the mean response of respondents as a whole. The percentage of respondents selecting the sixth option - 'I'm not familiar with this topic' - is listed in the corresponding column; this response choice was not included in calculating response means.

The second item in the needs assessment section was addressed to respondents with a handicapped son/daughter 12 years of age or older. Respondents were requested to rate transition age services according to their importance in meeting their current needs. Figure 5 presents the services arranged in decreasing order of rated importance as determined by the mean response of respondents as a whole. The percentage of respondents selecting the sixth option - 'I'm not familiar with this topic' - is listed in the corresponding column; this response choice was not included in calculating response means.

Mean Ratings for Importance of Potential Services in Meeting Current Nee of Parents of Handicapped Children

	Very important	Moderately important	important	Slightly important	Not important	I am not familiar with this topic
information about your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
increased sensitivity of nonhandicapped students to the feelings and needs of handicapped students	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
opportunities for school staff to learn more about the nature of your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
information for school staff on methods of increasing professional openness to involvement by parents in education	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
information on how parents can promote effective service for handicapped students in the least restrictive educational setting	1	2	3	4	5	6 4%
research results on the educational effectiveness of various teaching techniques and classroom environments	1	2	3	4	5	6 4%
opportunities for school staff to learn more about the emotional needs of parents having a handicapped child	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
information on stress in families with a handicapped child and methods for dealing with it	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
in-depth information on assessment procedures and instruments used in schools	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%

	Very important	Moderately important	important	Slightly important	Not important	I am not familiar with this to
information on available elementary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
in-depth information on planning and writing an IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
information comparing the benefits of teaching academic skills versus independent living and vocational skills in school	1	2	3	4	5	6 6%
information on the special vulnerability of handicapped persons to sexual abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6 2%
information on the preparation of a will providing care for your handicapped child in case of your death	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
in-depth information on conciliation conferences, due process hearings, and complaint procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on available secondary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
aid with the shock, anger, denial, acceptance surrounding your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
regular meetings with parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on the nature and use of drugs in the management of some disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6 4%
information on the differences in systems between preschool and elementary school	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on available preschool programs	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
information on the impact of minimum competency testing on special education students	1	2	3	4	5	6 6%
information on the use of computers in special education	1	2	3	4	5	6 4%
family training: methods of teaching, modifying behavior, managing physical disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
training in effective communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on community resources: medical personnel skilled in dealing with handicapped children, in-home child care, out of home child care, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%
information on how parents can encourage the creation of a greater number and variety of work settings, living arrangements, and continuing education options for handicapped young adults after they have completed their school years	1	2	3	4	5	6 5%
advocacy training in seeking services for your child	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on early planning for your child's years after his/her completion of school	1	2	3	4	5	6 1%

FIGURE 5

Mean Ratings for Importance of Potential Services in Meeting Current Needs of Parents with Handicapped Children 12 Years of Age or Older.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	I Am Not Familiar With This Topic
information on the assessment of vocational skills	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on vocational training: job seeking skills, work adjustment skills, vocational skills, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on the assessment of independent living skills	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on the schools' role in assessing vocational and independent living skills	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on writing goals for vocational training or independent living skills training into the IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on job placement services	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on Section 504 legal protections against discrimination based on handicap in housing, employment, training programs, post secondary education, transportation, and access to public services	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	I Am Not Familiar With This Topic
information on training of independent living skills: food and nutrition, personal hygiene, transportation skills, consumer skills, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on sex education programs	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on county, state, and federal income support programs for your son/daughter	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on recreational programs and social groups for your son/daughter	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on noncompetitive work situations: day activity centers, sheltered workshops, guided competitive employment, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on group homes and other supervised living situations	1	2	3	4	5	6 6%
information on semi-independent living situations: adult board and room residences, supervised resident apartments, transitional independent living situations, homemaker services, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6 8%

The final item of the needs assessment section of the survey asked respondent with handicapped children 12 years of age or older to indicate on a five point scale the level of interest they thought their son or daughter would have in attending workshops on particular topics. Figure 6 presents the workshop topics arranged in decreasing order of rated interest as determined by the mean response of respondents as a whole. The percentage of respondents selecting the sixth option - 'I am not familiar with this topic' - is listed in the corresponding column; this response option was not included in calculating response means.

Rated among the first three was information on the son's or daughter's disability, a ranking reflecting the consistent indication throughout the survey of the interest in this information by the respondents themselves. Also reflecting the respondents' own interests was the low ranking of information on semi-independent living situations.

FIGURE 6

Mean Ratings by Parents for Interest of Handicapped Young Adults in Potential Workshop Topics.

	Great Interest	Slight Interest	Neither Interested Nor Disinterested	Slight Disinterest	Great Disinterest	I Am Not Familiar With This Topic
training in building his/her sense of self-worth	1	2	3	4	5	6 -
information on his/her disability	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
training in effective communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6 -
information on job placement services	1	2	3	4	5	6 3%
information on sexual abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on recreational programs and social groups	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on support groups for handicapped youth or young adults	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%

	Great Interest	Slight Interest	Neither Interested Nor Disinteresed	Slight Disinterest	Great Disinterest	I Am Not Familiar With This Topic
information on Section 504 protections against discrimination based on handicap	1	2	3	4	5	6 6%
advocacy training in seeking community services	1	2	3	4	5	6 -
information on semi-independent living situations	1	2	3	4	5	6 0%
information on county, state and federal income maintenance programs	1	2	3	4	5	6 6%

DISCUSSION

Five hundred and one people attended PACER's Level II and Level III workshops on the special education laws from which respondents for this survey were drawn. The data suggest, however, that information presented during the workshops was disseminated by attendees, thereby multiplying the effect of PACER's efforts. Thirty percent of the respondents referred to written material distributed at the workshop to provide information about the special education laws to another parent or to a professional. During the 13-16 month period from their attendance at the workshop to their completion of the questionnaire, 58% of the respondents gave information to other parents of handicapped children about special education rights and responsibilities. On the average, respondents talked 2.52 times per month with other parents about issues concerning their handicapped children, and 48% of the respondents were participants in formal or informal groups for parents of the handicapped.

The workshops provide an overview of the history and current mandates of the federal and state special education laws, and 89% of the respondents indicated receipt of such information had been their purpose in attending the workshop. Repspondents rated the workshop maximally effective in developing the two attitudes/perceptions PACER considers most essential: 1) awareness that a handicapped child and his/her parents have rights guaranteed by the special education laws that cannot be taken away and 2) awareness that it is important for a parent to be actively involved in planning his/her child's special education program. PACER intends the packet of information it provides to be a resource on which workshop attendees can later draw, and 81% of the respondents indicated they had in fact referred to the materials they had been given.

Effects of Workshop

PACER intends its workshops to have a lasting effect on participants' attitudes about the special education process, their knowledge of the law's provisions, and their involvement in their child's special education program. Comparing responses from survey questions in these three areas, it appears the workshops were most effective in changing respondents' attitudes. On a five point scale, respondents' mean rating of the workshop's role in developing nine attitudes/dispositions lay within the scale's first two categories: very important and moderately important.

Thirteen to sixteen months after attendance at a PACER workshop, respondents were able to answer correctly 41% of the survey's eight questions about provisions of the special education law. The level of difficulty of the survey questions may in part account for the respondents' performance. There was a significant positive correlation for both metropolitan ($p=.020$) and out-state ($p=.001$) respondents, however, between their level of agreement with statements indicating sufficient familarity with the law to use it to promote a child's education and their ability to correctly answer factual questions on the law's mandates.

There are a number of specific actions speakers at PACER workshops encouraged parents to take. In the appropriate situation, approxmately 35% of the respondents pursued any one of the courses that had been recommended: bringing the IEP home to examine it before signing (31%); withholding approval of the IEP if dissatisfied with its content (37%); meeting for an explanation of assessment results before an IEP planning session (33%); and requesting additional testing

if original assessment results did not accurately reflect a child's abilitiit , (39%).

Suggestions for Workshop on the Special Education Laws

Since attitudes, as measured here, seem most amenable to change, PACER should identify those attitudes it considers essential to effective and informed parental involvement in the special education process and stress them in the workshop's presentations.

Performance on the knowledge section of the questionnaire was significantly correlated with level of education of females/mothers living in out-state areas ($p=.002$), and with having accessed a variety of extra informational resources for metropolitan respondents. Level of education of out-state females/mothers was significantly ($p=.004$) lower than that of metropolitan females/mothers, and, on the average, only 22% of the respondents received additional information on the special education law from other workshops or from phone contact with, or printed material from, a disability group or parent training organization.

PACER could take additional steps to assist parents:

- PACER should obtain a toll-free phone number
- attendees should be provided a handout for taking notes that is arranged by workshop topic
- an outline of the workshop's content should be provided as a handout, and visually displayed and reviewed at the start of the workshop

In future written evaluations of its workshops, PACER should include items in which respondents rate their sense of familiarity with the law. In this survey, self-reports were significantly correlated with ability to correctly answer factual questions on the law.

Thirty percent of the respondents said their purpose in attending the PACER workshop had been to meet other parents of handicapped children. When asked to indicate what information they thought it important for parents to know to assist their handicapped child in receiving a good education, but which had not been included in the PACER workshop, respondents most frequently suggested information on the importance of associating with other parents of handicapped children for emotional support and feedback.

The attitudes respondents rated the workshop least effective in developing were awareness that concerns about a child's education are shared by parents of other handicapped children, and comfortableness in discussing concerns about a handicapped child and his/her education with others. Out-state respondents rated the workshops significantly more important than metropolitan respondents in these two areas ($p=.046$, $.012$ respectively).

PACER may want to consider these needs by providing more time for interaction between participants, either by expanding small group discussions time/opportunities, or by including, and advertising, a period after the workshop during which parents could meet with one another.

Suggested Additional PACER Services

Fifty-nine percent of the respondents said their purpose in attending the PACER workshop had been to review recent changes in special education laws/regulations, a topic not specifically addressed but incorporated in the workshops on the special education laws. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents indicated a need to have received more information on techniques for communicating with school staff than was presented at the workshop. PACER's Level IV workshops review topical issues in special education, and its Levels II and III communication workshops focus on improving communication skills. Because of time and budget constraints, however, these workshops are offered mainly in the metropolitan area. PACER should seek the means of addressing these needs in out-state areas, and include methods that are feasible to an organization with limited staff. For example, bulletins on topical special education issues could be sent to out-state persons who had requested receipt of such information. Development of a video-taped communications training package could be considered for circulation to groups of persons in out-state areas.

PACER Center should consider developing Levels II and III workshops on the IEP and on assessment alone for several reasons.

- 22% of the respondents indicated a need to have received more information on the IEP than was presented at the workshop, and 21% expressed the same desire concerning assessment.

- low mean level of overall satisfaction with a child's special education program was significantly correlated with: dissatisfaction with the content of the IEP ($p=.007$); disagreement about the accuracy of the assessment results in reflecting a child's abilities ($p=.019$).

- command of functional information may increase a person's confidence and effectiveness. Intensive workshops on the IEP and assessment would increase parent's retention of the specifics of the law in these areas.

- to increase the likelihood of effecting an increase in behaviors it considers important for parents to pursue, PACER needs to provide the parents the means with which to perform the behaviors. For example, to make it worthwhile to bring an IEP home for consideration before signing it, parents have to have bases upon which to judge the content of the IEP. A new PACER workshop developed on the IEP should include, among other topics, information on: identifying and defining goals for a child, targeting and recording behavior, and identifying and writing behaviorally measurable goals to facilitate judgment about progress. An assessment workshop could include more specific information on assessment, administration procedure on test results, the availability and applicability of tests for specific handicapping conditions, and the translation of assessment results into IEP goals.

If PACER were to develop a list of available special education programs and services for handicapped children within and across Minnesota school districts

and cooperatives, and prepare discussion programs of research examining the relative efficacy of various teaching techniques, it would be addressing needs expressed by parents in this portion of the evaluation and by parent advocates in another section of this evaluation. Similarly, multiple requests for information on special handicapping conditions were made throughout all sections of this evaluation.

STUDY 3

INTRODUCTION

During the 12 months from July 1982 to July 1983, PACER conducted six of its Level IV training of trainers workshops. The purposes of PACER's Level IV workshops are multiple: to provide updates on topical issues in special education, to provide skills training useful to parents and advocates in special education, and to provide training to parents to assist PACER staff in presentations at PACER's Level II and Level III parent training workshops on the special education laws. Attendees at these workshops include parents of handicapped children who are involved in advocating for more than their own child's educational rights, and staff members of advocacy organizations and administrative agencies concerned with promoting the educational rights of handicapped children and youth.

PACER had generally gathered feedback from workshop attendees immediately upon completion of a workshop at the end of the fiscal year. However, comprehensive feedback after a period of time has not been gathered. In addition, Level IV workshop attendees - people interested in the broader perspective of special education presented at such workshops and frequently involved in advocacy efforts over the years - are potentially valuable sources of information and perceptions on special education, the needs of parents, and ideas for programming directions for PACER. Study 3 surveys persons who attended Level IV workshops during fiscal year 1982-1983 for their opinions in all of these areas.

METHOD

Instrument

An initial stage in the development of the Level IV questionnaire was discussion of the role of advocates in special education with PACER's Board of Directors, composed of parents of handicapped children, members of disability advocacy organizations and educators. The subsequent questionnaire was reviewed by PACER's co-directors for content validity and relevance. One member of the research advisory board provided detailed feedback on the questionnaire's content and format. The form was edited to reflect all feedback, and prepared in its final form for distribution (Appendix 3.)

Subjects and Procedure

Attendance rosters for 1982-1983 Level IV workshops were reviewed by the co-directors of PACER and 100 parents and/or members of advocacy organizations were selected for receipt of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were mailed in May 1984, with a cover letter briefly explaining PACER's research evaluation grant and requesting completion of the questionnaire within seven days. Enclosed was a self-addressed stamped envelope. Surveys were completed anonymously, allowing no follow-up to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

RESULTS

Thirty nine questionnaires (39%) were completed and returned. The extent of bias interjected by the relatively low response rate could not be assessed.

Characteristics

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents were affiliated with a disability organization as paid or volunteer staff, or as a member of an advisory board or board of directors. Eighteen percent were teachers or administrators within special education, or staff members of a college department, state or regulatory agency addressing special education issues.

Attendees from each of the six Level IV workshops were represented among respondents. Fifty-three percent of the respondents had attended one workshop, 29% had attended two, and the remaining 18% had attended between three and five workshops. Respondents indicated the type(s) of advocacy activities in which they had engaged since having attended the PACER workshop(s) in 1982-1983, and summary data are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Involvement in Each Type of Activity.

I provided parents information, counsel or personal participation for IEP meetings, conciliation conferences, due process or complaint procedures.	74%
I wrote news articles, letters to the editor, or letters to legislators or to other policy makers on special education topics.	69%
I spoke at meetings of the school board or of church, civic or parent groups about special education.	54%
I provided technical assistance or consultation to parent groups, educators, administrators or legislators in areas of special education.	54%
I lobbied legislators or persons on other policy making boards/organizations and/or provided testimony to such groups on special education issues.	51%
I helped form a parent group and/or was actively involved in program planning for a parent group whose meetings and activities involved special education issues.	46%
I spoke at, helped plan, or otherwise participated in the running of a workshop or conference on special education.	38%
I was involved in research or policy making in areas of special education.	36%

Workshop Feedback

Respondents were asked to rate the information presented at each of the workshops they had attended on a five point scale for its importance to them in their effectiveness as advocates. The mean rating for each of the workshops ranged between the first two points on the scale: 'extremely important' and 'somewhat important'. Within this two point range, the most favored workshop was a meeting over lunch with a federal staff person on proposed changes in special education regulations, and the least, a techniques workshop given by an advertising firm on gaining access to the media and developing positive media presentations.

Several goals of PACER Level IV training workshops were listed on the survey, and respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale the degree to which workshops had met those goals for them (Figure 1) The function most served by PACER workshops for attendees was the provision of factual information not otherwise available.

FIGURE 1

Mean Ratings on the Degree to Which Workshop(s) Met PACER's Goals.

	great degree				not at all	don't recall
to provide a source of factual information that would not otherwise be available to participants	1	2	3	4	5	6
to provide participants an environment in which past advocacy efforts for handicapped children and youth are reinforced and continued advocacy efforts are supported	1	2	3	4	5	6
to provide an occasion for participants to become familiar with the concerns of other through questions and comments from the audience	1	2	3	4	5	6
to provide an occasion for participants to exchange experiences and ideas with other advocates	1	2	3	4	5	6
to provide an opportunity for participants to become familiar with the particular perspective of a parent advocacy organization on special education issues	1	2	3	4	5	6

Future Directions

Respondents were asked for suggestions on format and content of future PACER workshops. On a five point scale ranging from 'Very Helpful' (1) to 'Not At All Helpful' (5), there was a mean response of 1.81 to a question asking how helpful it would be to have current issues in special education discussed in a debate format with speakers representing opposing views. Open-ended responses concerning workshop format suggested: parent/professional panels to stimulate audience participation; role playing sessions; and small group discussions after speaker presentations to allow interchange on what actions should be taken.

The topic most frequently suggested for future Level IV workshops was special education entrance and exit criteria - their effects, legality, and differences across districts. Other topics included:

the post-secondary vocational education study conducted by the Minnesota Legislative Audit Commission

the special education assessment study conducted by the Minnesota Legislature

the advantages and disadvantages of the new Minnesota Semi Independent Living Programs (alternatives to current ICF-MR group homes and institutions)

the adequacy of day activity centers and work activity centers in the metropolitan area

the effect of 0-4 years mandated special education service on day activity centers

methods of affecting preparation of regular education teachers for teaching special education students in mainstreamed situations

methods of affecting the appropriateness and quality of mainstream placements

the function of outside assessment, and incorporation of its results into educational programming

data based management in special education

definition and assessment of student progress; teacher accountability for progress

issues involved in transition from secondary school to post-secondary education or work situations; educational preparation for transition

experimental education programs and research in the education of the handicapped

community resources available to parents

special education licensure

training in the political process: how and where decisions are made affecting special education programming and funding

effectiveness of federal and state special education legislation

networking methods for advocates

in-depth training in media usage; public speaking training

support/discussion/education workshops for people contacting PACER by phone for individual assistance

Respondents were presented with a list of potential resources/services and were asked to indicate which of them they would like to have available for support in their special education advocacy efforts (Table 2). The resource most frequently selected (72%) was educational research data on the efficacy of special education, various teaching techniques, and school environments for specific handicapping conditions.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Potential Resource/Service as Helpful to Themselves.

information on educational research on the efficacy of special education, of various teaching techniques, and of school environments for specific handicapping conditions	72%
listings of resources available to parents, e.g. local parent support groups, child-care services, sources for outside assessments, out-of-home residences for handicapped children and adults, etc.	59%
in-depth information on assessment: instruments, procedures, the relation of assessment results to educational programming	56%
information on resources available to students completing school, e.g. vocational training programs, income maintenance programs, etc.	49%
in-depth information on legally established procedures for resolving disagreements: conciliation conferences, due process hearings, complaint procedures	44%
up-dates on issues for complaint procedures and compliance deviations from special education rules and regulations within Minnesota	38%
information on the appropriate person (line of authority) to address regarding advocacy concerns within school districts, federal and state legislatures and agencies	36%
in-depth information on planning and writing an IEP	33%
regular meetings for persons engaged in similar types of advocacy to exchange ideas, information, performance feedback	31%
assertiveness training with a focus on IEP meetings: role playing in small groups, video tape feedback, etc.	23%

The special education advocates were asked for their opinions on what parent could be taught that would help them contribute to the effectiveness of thei. handicapped child's educational program. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents answered this open-ended question, and the two most frequently stated suggestions for parent training were: 1) methods for evaluating the quality of special education programming and, 2) strategies for coming to terms with a child's handicapping condition. The remaining suggestions for parent training clustered into four areas: 1) the political system and the effect of parental involvement on funding, 2) assessment instruments and procedures, 3) available special education programs and services, and 4) considerations in identifying a child's needs and planning for his/her future.

The final area in which respondents were asked for suggestions concerned potential future activities by PACER to improve the quality of special education in Minnesota (Table 3). The option most frequently selected of the four presented to respondents was presentations on the special education laws for regular education teachers.

TABLE 3

Percentage of Respondents Selecting Each Potential PACER Activity As Helpful to Special Education.

preparing presentations for regular education teachers to familiarize them with the special education laws	67%
preparing presentations and materials on the special education laws for parents with limited educational backgrounds	64%
providing for professionals a source of information on educational issues e.g., surrogate rules, transition needs, 0-4 legislation, impediments to parental involvement in special education, etc.	56%
becoming involved in efforts to improve the quality of regular education	38%

Current and Future Special Education Issues

The remaining items on the questionnaire asked respondents for their opinions on current and future issues in special education. Seventy-two percent of the respondents answered the open-ended query: What current issues in special education are most in need of advocacy efforts? Their responses clustered into the following areas:

special education service for children 0-4 years of age

transition issues: vocational training in primary and secondary school; post-secondary vocational education; out-of-home living situations

funds for special education; funds in low-population areas

least restrictive environments: guaranteeing their provision; providing appropriate support in the mainstream

entrance/exit criteria; service to borderline handicapped students

identification of parents in need of special education information

special education quality

improved assessment instruments/procedures; individualized programming based on asssessment results

service for students with low-incidence handicaps

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents replied to the question: What do you think will be the future issues in special education to which advocates will have to direct their attention? The most frequent replies were funding and special education service for children 0-4 years of age. The remaining responses included:

regular education: monitoring mainstreaming; training regular education staff; providing support service in regular education classrooms; improving interaction between regular and special education

service for 'at risk' populations; service to E/BD students and borderline students

quality of special education

transition services; vocational education; post-secondary vocational education

competency testing

access to computers and sophisticated software

individualized versus group programming

community-education for multiply handicapped persons

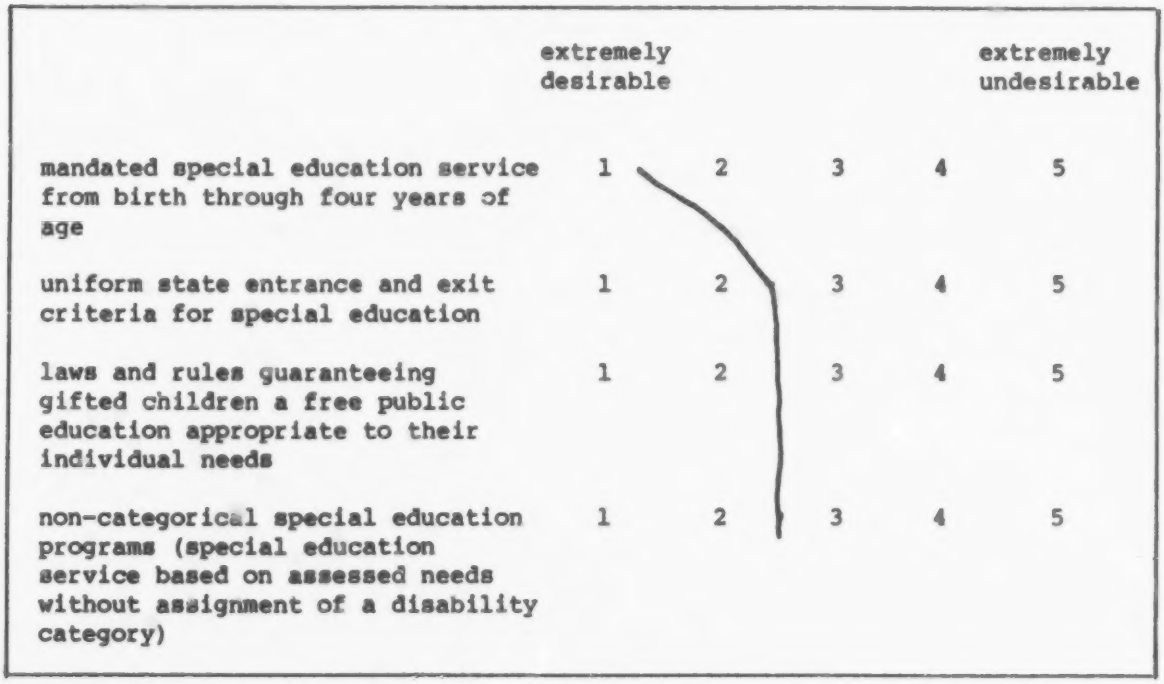
attempted modifications of existing special education regulations

use of paraprofessionals in DAC's, public health agencies, and other service agencies for the handicapped

On a five-point scale measuring desirability, respondents indicated their feelings about four apparent trends in special education in Minnesota. The clearly preferred trend was mandated special education service from birth through four years of age (Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2

Mean Ratings for Desirability of Apparent Trends in Special Education.


extremely desirable
extremely undesirable
mandated special education service from birth through four years of age
1 2 3 4 5
uniform state entrance and exit criteria for special education
1 2 3 4 5
laws and rules guaranteeing gifted children a free public education appropriate to their individual needs
1 2 3 4 5
non-categorical special education programs (special education service based on assessed needs without assignment of a disability category)
1 2 3 4 5

DISCUSSION

The six Level IV workshops PACER presented during the 1982-1983 fiscal year were all rated highly for value to attendees in their effectiveness as advocates. The success of PACER in meeting the needs of participants in its advocacy workshops is noteworthy as this group is relatively sophisticated in its understanding of the field of special education, its laws, and its contemporary issues.

PACER's primary goal in presenting Level IV workshops - the provision of information not otherwise available - was the goal respondents indicated had been best met in workshops they had attended. The workshops were rated somewhat less effective in providing an environment conducive to the exchange of information

and ideas between advocates. A desire for such participant interchange was indicated in suggestions respondents made for changes in future workshop form t: parent/professional panels to stimulate audience participation; small group discussion after speaker presentations; and role playing sessions.

In the valuable survey results were the ideas for future PACER programming provided by people involved in a variety of activities. The topic suggested most frequently for future Level IV training of trainers workshops was entrance and exit criteria for special education service. The two workshop topics respondents felt would be of most benefit to parents of handicapped children in general were methods for evaluating the quality of special education programming, and strategies for coming to terms with a child's handicapping condition. The potential resource/service respondents indicated they would most like to have available for support in their special education advocacy efforts was educational research information on the efficacy of special education and of various instructional techniques and school environments in teaching children with various handicapping conditions.

Several other issues appeared with regularity in responses to open-ended questions eliciting ideas for future programs. These include:

- special education service for children from birth to four years of age
- transition services for the young handicapped adult
- mainstreaming and the least restrictive environment
- lists of education and community resources for parents of handicapped children

Suggestions in this survey overlap those made by parents and educators in other studies included in this evaluation, and as such, provide a rationale for the commitment of PACER resources to the development of expertise in new and complicated areas in special education. In addition, the level of activity of attendees at PACER Level IV workshops in the area of special education amplifies the effect of information presented at these workshops, an asset of which PACER should be mindful in attempting to address the needs and interests of this sophisticated group of people.

STUDY 4

INTRODUCTION

In its Level V service, PACER Center provides individual training and assistance by answering telephone and mail inquiries from parents of handicapped children, advocacy representatives, educational professionals, and others. During the 1982-1983 fiscal year, PACER received 5,401 such inquiries. The vast majority of these communications were by telephone. This service reaches more individuals than any other of PACER's direct contact programs. Because of the breadth of this outreach and the amount of staff time involved in providing this service, it is important to assess the degree to which PACER is meeting the needs of its individual callers and advancing educational goals it considers important. Study 4 surveys parents, guardians, and advocacy representatives who called PACER during the 1982-1983 fiscal year.

METHOD

The majority of items for this instrument were selected from questionnaires administered to PACER workshop attendees in other studies included in this evaluation. New items were prepared after discussion with the research coordinator and the co-directors of PACER Center regarding information that would be most useful in assessing the value of this service (Appendix 4.)

PACER Center keeps a written record of all phone conversations with persons calling for information. From these records were randomly selected the names of parents, guardians, and advocacy representatives who had called PACER for individual training and assistance during the 1982-1983 fiscal year. The resulting records were divided into those for out-state calls and those for metropolitan calls. Names were randomly selected from each group and were reviewed to eliminate persons already included in other portions of this study.

In May 1984, two hundred and sixty-seven questionnaires were mailed: 64 to out-state callers and 203 to metropolitan callers. Included with the questionnaire was a cover letter briefly explaining the PACER evaluation grant and a stamped, self-addresssed envelope. Follow-up calls were not made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

RESULTS

Characteristics

Thirty-one questionnaires (48%) were received from persons living in out-state areas and 54 (27%), from metropolitan residents, resulting in an overall return rate of 32%. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents were natural parents, foster parents or guardians of handicapped children, and nine percent indicated they were special education professionals or representatives from a disability organization. Summary data for the age and handicap(s) of the oldest child within the family are included in Table 1; reported disabilities are not limited to the primary handicapping condition.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Respondents Selecting Categories for their Child's Handicap and Age.

Handicap* Parents listed all of child's disabilities		Age	
visual impairment	20%	0-3 years	2%
hearing impairment	19%	4-6 years	15%
speech impairment	39%	7-10 years	29%
cerebral palsy/spina bifida/ other physical handicaps	24%	11-15 years	33%
		16-20 years	14%
Epilepsy/diabetes/heart/	25%	over 20 years	4%
asthma/other health disorders		blank	2%
developmental delay (4 years and under)	6%		
learning disability	46%		
mental retardation	35%		
behavior problem	33%		
emotional disturbance	12%		
autism	6%		

One-third of the respondents had attended a PACER workshop, and a similar number (32%) had gone to a workshop/seminar/conference on the special education laws given by an organization other than PACER; there was no significant overlap between the two groups of workshop attendees. People were asked to indicate sources other than workshops from which they had gained information on the special education rights of children (Table 2). Respondents from metropolitan and out-state areas were similar in the degree to which they had used all resources except school personnel: Metropolitan respondents had received information on the special education laws from school personnel to a significantly greater degree ($p=.042$) than had out-state parents. Seventy-one percent of both metropolitan and out-state respondents had provided information to other parents of handicapped children on the special education laws, and 84% had recommended PACER as a resource to parents of handicapped children.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Option as a Source of Special Education Information.

PACER newsletter	59%
parents of other handicapped children	51%
phone contact with PACER Center	44%
school personnel	44%
newsletter from another parent organization or disability group	38%
literature on special education laws from PACER Center	36%
literature on special education rights from another parent organization or disabilty group	27%
phone contact with another parent organization or disability group	24%

Using a five point scale, respondents rated the degree to which they agreed with statements on attitudes about their assertiveness in interactions with school staff, their knowledge of one aspect of the special education law, and their sense of isolation in dealing with situations surrounding their child's handicap(s). The statements were drawn from attitude items included in questionnaires given participants in PACER workshops on the special education laws (Studies 1 and 2). In a manner similiar to workshop participants in Studies 1 and 2, respondents indicated greater agreement with a statement indicating responsibility to monitor school compliance with the special education law than with a statement indicating knowledge of specific provisions of the law (Table 3).

TABLE 3

Mean Response to Attitude Items.

	Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
I would press for a change in my child's special education services even if doing so would damage a comfortable relationship with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
I know which procedures are provided in the special education laws to aid me in the solution of disagreements I might have with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
It is up to me to watch that the special education laws/regulations for my child are being obeyed, and to question the school if they are not.	1	2	3	4	5
I generally feel alone in dealing with situations surrounding my child's handicap(s).	1	2	3	4	5

The survey contained two questions concerning the respondents' behavior. Sixty-four percent of people completing questionnaires indicated that on at least one occasion they had requested special education service not being offered their child by the school. On another item, 33% of the respondents reported they were participants in formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children.

Feedback on Telephone Contact with PACER Center

During the 1982-1983 school year, respondents called PACER an average of 2.40 times; out-state respondents were most likely to have called once, while metropolitan respondents were most likely to have phoned PACER twice. Sixty-three percent of people having multiple phone contacts with PACER during 1982-1983 indicated that the subject of additional calls was the same as that of the original contact.

Forty-six percent of the respondents had contacted PACER prior to the 1982-1 school year about concerns related to their handicapped children, and a similar number (42%) contacted PACER during the 1983-1984 school year. PACER had been the first source of information for 32% of the respondents, while 53% contacted PACER to supplement or confirm information they had already garnered. There was a significant correlation (p=.003) between membership in a formal or informal group of parents of handicapped children and having contacted PACER for supplemental information.

Using a five-point scale, respondents indicated their agreement with statements about the usefulness of their phone contact(s) with PACER staff. Table 4 contains the mean level of agreement with statements for respondents as a whole, and the percentages of out-state and metropolitan respondents selecting each individual level of agreement. The response mean is based on the first five response categories; percentages for out-state respondents appear in the top line of each pair of rows in Table 4 and metropolitan respondents appear in the bottom line.

TABLE 4

Mean Overall Response, and Percentage of Out-state and Metropolitan Respondents Selecting Each Response Option.

	Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree	I Don't Recall	Does Not Apply	$\bar{X}$
the concern(s)/issue(s) about which you called was/were understood by the parent advisor with whom you spoke	70% 54%	23% 40%	0% 2%	4% 2%	0% 0%	0% 0%	0% 2%	1.48%
the information you received was directly related to your concerns	62% 42%	24% 40%	3% 9%	7% 4%	3% 2%	0% 0%	0% 4%	1.75%
the information you received was realistic (i.e. did not raise false hopes)	62% 35%	28% 52%	0% 6%	3% 4%	7% 2%	0% 0%	0% 2%	1.78%
the suggestions for action were possible for you to carry out	52% 32%	28% 40%	7% 13%	7% 2%	2% 4%	0% 4%	0% 6%	1.94%
the referral to another resource or agency was helpful	46% 21%	4% 19%	7% 15%	4% 2%	11% 2%	4% 0%	25% 40%	2.04%

There were no statistically signficiant differences between the mean respons , of metropolitan and out-state respondents for any of the five statements. However, there was a consistent trend in responses within the first two categories of the five point scale: the percentage of out-state respondents totally agreeing with a statement always exceeded the percentage of metropolitan respondents doing so, and this relationship was reversed within the second category - 'agree' - on the scale.

The development of attitudes/dispositions considered important to parent involvement in a child's special education is a goal of PACER in its contacts with parents, whether over the phone or in workshops. A list of seven of these attitudes/dispositions was contained in the survey and respondents were asked to rate on a five point scale how important the telephone contact with PACER had been to their developing these attitudes/dispositions. Available for each item was the response option: 'I was comfortable in this area before I called PACER'. Table 5 presents the mean ratings for respondents as a whole and the frequency with which out-state and metropolitan respondents selected each level of importance on the five point scale. The response mean is based on the first five response categories; percentages of out-state respondents appear in the top line of each pair of rows in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Mean Overall Response, and Percentage of Out-state and Metropolitan Respondents Selecting Each Response Option.

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I was Comfortable in this Area Before I Called PACER	$\bar{X}$
awareness of the importance of being actively involved in planning my child's school program	62% 44%	7% 13%	0% 8%	7% 4%	0% 0%	24% 31%	1.50%
determination to discuss my concerns about my child's program with school staff	62% 49%	10% 14%	3% 16%	3% 0%	3% 0%	17% 22%	1.55%
awareness that my child and I have rights guaranteed by the special education laws that cannot be taken away	55% 49%	7% 8%	3% 13%	10% 0%	0% 2%	24% 28%	1.58%
awareness of the importance of gathering my information and thoughts on my child's performance and needs before going into an IEP eeting	62% 41%	10% 18%	0% 14%	3% 6%	0% 2%	24% 20%	1.67%
comfortableness in asking questions about decisions made by school staff	62% 36%	3% 27%	0% 12%	7% 2%	3% 2%	24% 21%	1.70%
awareness of the procedures available within special education laws to aid me in resolving disagreements with school staff	62% 40%	3% 21%	7% 12%	7% 4%	3% 2%	17% 21%	1.74%
comfortableness in discussing my concerns about my handicapped child and his/her education with others	63% 39%	3% 16%	3% 10%	7% 10%	0% 2%	23% 24%	1.74%

There were no significant differences between the mean responses of out-state and metropolitan respondents to any of the seven items. The tendency for out-state parents to rate their contact with PACER more favorably than metropolitan parents was evident in responses to the question on the usefulness of the phone contact was present in responses to these items.

Ninety-three percent of the respondents had received a selection of PACER's written materials. Forty-six percent of the respondents said they had referred to the materials to address a specific concern about their child's education, and thirty-nine percent reported they had used the materials as a source of information about the special education laws for another parent or a professional. Fifteen percent of these people indicated they had not referred to the materials they had received. As a result of information received from PACER by phone or mail, 40% of the respondents indicated they had become aware of issues that needed to be discussed with school staff.

In addition to providing feedback on information and materials provided them by PACER, 56% of the respondents listed some informaton they had not received from PACER which they considered important for parents to know to aid their getting their handicapped child a good education. Some of these suggestions were for information PACER provides in its workshops. The remaining suggestions clustered into the following areas:

- information on available medical, financial and legal services
- information on available special education programs across school districts
- information on specific disabilities and the implications of each for learning
- information on criteria for selecting mainstream environments
- information on preparation for moving into an independent living environment
- information on methods of educating extended family and communities about handicapped populations
- information on the role parent support groups in sustaining a parent's efforts to obtain educational service

DISCUSSION

A greater percentage of out-state residents (48%) completed this survey than did metropolitan residents (27%). Using a five point scale ranging from totally

agree (1) to totally disagree (5), respondents rated the extent of their agreement with statements about the usefulness of their phone contact with PACER. The ratings by respondents as a whole were positive, ranging between 1.48 and 2.04 on the five point scale. However, there was a consistent but not statistically significant tendency for out-state respondents to rate PACER more favorably than metropolitan respondents. This same tendency was again apparent in responses to a question asking respondents to indicate on a five point scale the importance of their phone contact with PACER to their developing specific attitudes/dispositions concerning special education. Without information on the nature of the concern about which parents phoned PACER, it can be assumed that, on the average, the quality of service provided to out-state and metropolitan residents was the same. It can be hypothesized that the cause for this differentially positive rating by out-state parents is less availability of support service for out-state parents, a situation of which PACER has been aware since its inception as an organization. While not strong enough on their own, these data can be added to those suggesting PACER consider establishing a toll free number and more assistance to outstate parents.

Ninety-eight percent of the respondents in this survey were parents or guardians of handicapped children. Parents contacting PACER by phone for individual training and assistance were part of a network of parents exchanging special education information. Fifty-one percent of the respondents had received information on the special education laws from other parents of handicapped children, 71% had provided information to other parents about the law, and 33% were participants in formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children. To these people PACER provided written materials on the special education laws.

Thirty-nine percent of the respondents used the materials as a source of information about the laws for another parent or professional. Eighty-four percent of the respondents had recommended PACER as a resource to other parents of handicapped children. This network of contacts into which PACER taps effectively increases the return on the dollar spent in providing individual training and assistance by phone to parents, and strongly reinforces PACER's continuing this aspect of its parent training services.

STUDY 5

INTRODUCTION

Educational professionals are one-half of the working equation in special education, and as such their perspective on educational issues and education related organizations is important. One of the avowed goals of PACER is to facilitate understanding and positive working relations between parents of children with handicaps and the educational professionals who serve those children. To that end, feedback from educators on the degree to which they perceive PACER as promoting effective and constructive parental involvement is important. Of interest for consideration in future programming decisions are the views of educational professionals on the unique contribution parent training organizations can make to the improvement of special education. Also important in planning organizational goals is anticipation of future needs, and educators have a particular perspective to offer on anticipated trends in special education.

Study 5 involved a survey of special education directors within the state of Minnesota. The purposes of the survey were two. One was to gather summative information from special education directors both on the extent and nature of their familiarity with PACER programs, and on the degree to which they perceived PACER's performance reflecting its stated objectives in parent education and individual parent training and assistance. The second purpose of the survey was to gather formative data on possible roles for parent training coalitions in facilitating the delivery and improving the quality of special education, and on the desirability and probability of potential trends in education.

METHOD

Instrument

After discussion with special education teachers, a special education director, and a parent advocate within PACER, the coordinator of the research grant developed an initial draft of the survey. This was reviewed by the two co-directors of PACER who examined its content for relevancy to PACER programs. The second draft of the survey was distributed to an out-state special education director, a Minnesota State Department of Education official familiar with PACER, and the consultant from the University of Minnesota who had participated in preparing the research evaluation grant of which the survey was a part. The final version of the questionnaire accommodated feedback received from these three sources, and contained a combination of 18 closed- and open-ended questions arranged in a three page format (Appendix 5.)

Subjects and Procedure

The questionnaire was sent in one mailing in April 1984, to all special education directors within Minnesota whose names were taken from a yearly revised listing of directors from the Minnesota State Department of Education.

Included with the survey were a self addressed stamped envelope and a cover letter briefly describing the purposes of the study and requesting return of the questionnaire within one week of receipt. As the survey was designed to be returned anonymously, no follow-up contact was possible to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

RESULTS

Seventy one of the 108 special education directors who were contacted completed the questionnaire, resulting in a 66% overall return rate. While the returns were annonymous, directors indicated on the questionnaire the special education region in which their districts were located. Thirty-one (44%) questionnaires were returned by metropolitan special education directors and 40 (56%), by out-state directors, a sample reflecting the actual distribution of directors within the state (40% metropolitan, 60% out-state). Fifty eight percent of the respondents were directors of special education cooperatives, umbrella organizational units serving multiple independent school districts.

Awareness and Use of PACER Services

Respondents were asked to indicate if they were familiar with the various services PACER provides (Table 1). The number of directors from out-state areas who indicated having attended PACER workshops for parents on the special education laws and/or communication techniques exceeded to a significant degree ($p=.004$) the number from the metropolitan area who did so. Conversely, metropolitan directors in significantly greater numbers than out-state directors indicated both that they had called PACER for information ($p=.017$) and that PACER had been involved in discussions between school staff and parents regarding special education service for one or more children in their district ($p=.000$).

TABLE 1

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Familiarity with Each of PACER's Services.

I have not heard of PACER.	0%
I am familiar with the name but do not specifically know what PACER does.	0%
I usually read the PACERSETTER (gold newsletter).	96%
I have a subscription to the ADVOCATE newsletter.	28%
I have heard of PACER's COUNT ME IN programs for increasing regular education students' awareness of handicapping conditions.	75%
I have attended an in-service, professional meeting, and/or college course at which PACER presented material.	92%
I have attended a PACER workshop for parents on special education law and/or communication techniques	58%
I have called PACER for information.	69%
PACER has been invovlved in discussions between school staff and parents regarding special education service for one or more children in this district.	65%

Future Directions

Directors were asked for their opinions on services that could be provided by a parent training organization to facilitate the delivery and/or improve the quality of special education. Four questions addressed these issues and were asked of all respondents regardless of the extent of their familiarity with PACER Center. Table 2 summarizes responses to the first of these questions: Would any of the following activities, if done by a statewide parent organization representing multiple disability groups (such as PACER), serve to improve the quality of special education?

TABLE 2

Percentage of Respondents Selecting Each Potential Activity.

becoming involved in efforts to improve the quality of regular education	69%
providing for professsionals a source of information on educational issues e.g., surrogate rules, transition needs, 0-4 legislation, impediments to parental involvement in special education, etc.	66%
preparing presentations for regular education teachers to familiarize them with the special education laws	51%
preparing presentations and materials on the special education laws for parents with limited educational backgrounds	51%

Eleven percent of the directors provided suggestions for potential activities in addition to those listed in Table 2. The majority of these remarks emphasized the importance to special education of improvements in regular education. The remaining suggestions for activities by a parent training coalition included:

- helping special educators improve their abilities to include parents in the IEP process
- sensitizing special education staff to parents' needs
- preparing materials for distribution within regular education and the general community to heighten awareness and sensitivity to handicapping conditions
- promoting systemic change within education, particularly in the area of mandated services for the gifted
- increasing the network and local availability of parent advocacy organizations
- helping LEA's establish parent groups

Forty-four percent of the directors responded to the open-ended question: Are there any services for parents and/or professionals that could be provided by a statewide parent organization representing multiple disability groups (such as

PACER) that would help eliminate some of the difficulties you encounter in providing students appropriate special education? Grouped as to content, and arranged in descending order of frequency, the responses were:

- providing parents of handicapped children information on specfic disabilities
- providing parents assistance and support in coming to terms with having a handicapped child
- providing information on the mandates of the special education laws
- strengthening parent advocacy organizations
- providing in-service training for special educators
- promoting statewide educational policy changes
- improving regular education
- decreasing adversarial relations between schools and parents
- developing an informational clearinghouse for programs available throughout the state

Forty-four percent of the directors responded to the question: Are there any system changes for which parents could advocate that would facilitate your efforts to provide students appropriate special education? Grouped according to content and arranged in descending order of frequency, the responses were:

- improvements in regular education (changes in methods of determining staffing ratios to foster mainstreaming; curriculum improvements; professional awareness of special education mandates; accountability; decreased hostility toward special education)
- provision of services for handicapped children 0-4 years of age (mandated special education; increased interagency cooperation; improved pre-referral services)
- increases in funding for special education
- improvements in the availability and quality of vocational training
- development of statewide disability criteria for special education service
- modification of federal and state special education laws (due process procedures; use of para-professionals)
- development of non-categorical special education service
- improvements in advocacy services; development of school-parent committees; advocacy for ED/BD students
- improvements in technology application
- the strengthening of rural cooperatives.

Forty eight percent of the directors responded to the question: What needs of parents of handicapped children should be addressed to increase the effectiveness of their children's special education? Grouped according to content and arranged in descending order of frequency, the needs that were indicated were:

- information on the mandates of the special education laws and training in the skills and attitudes necessary for parents to avail themselves of the laws' provisions
- programs on parenting skills and on the skills to facilitate carryover of school programs to the home
- parent support (information on its availability; programs for aiding parents in accepting a child's handicapping condition; programs

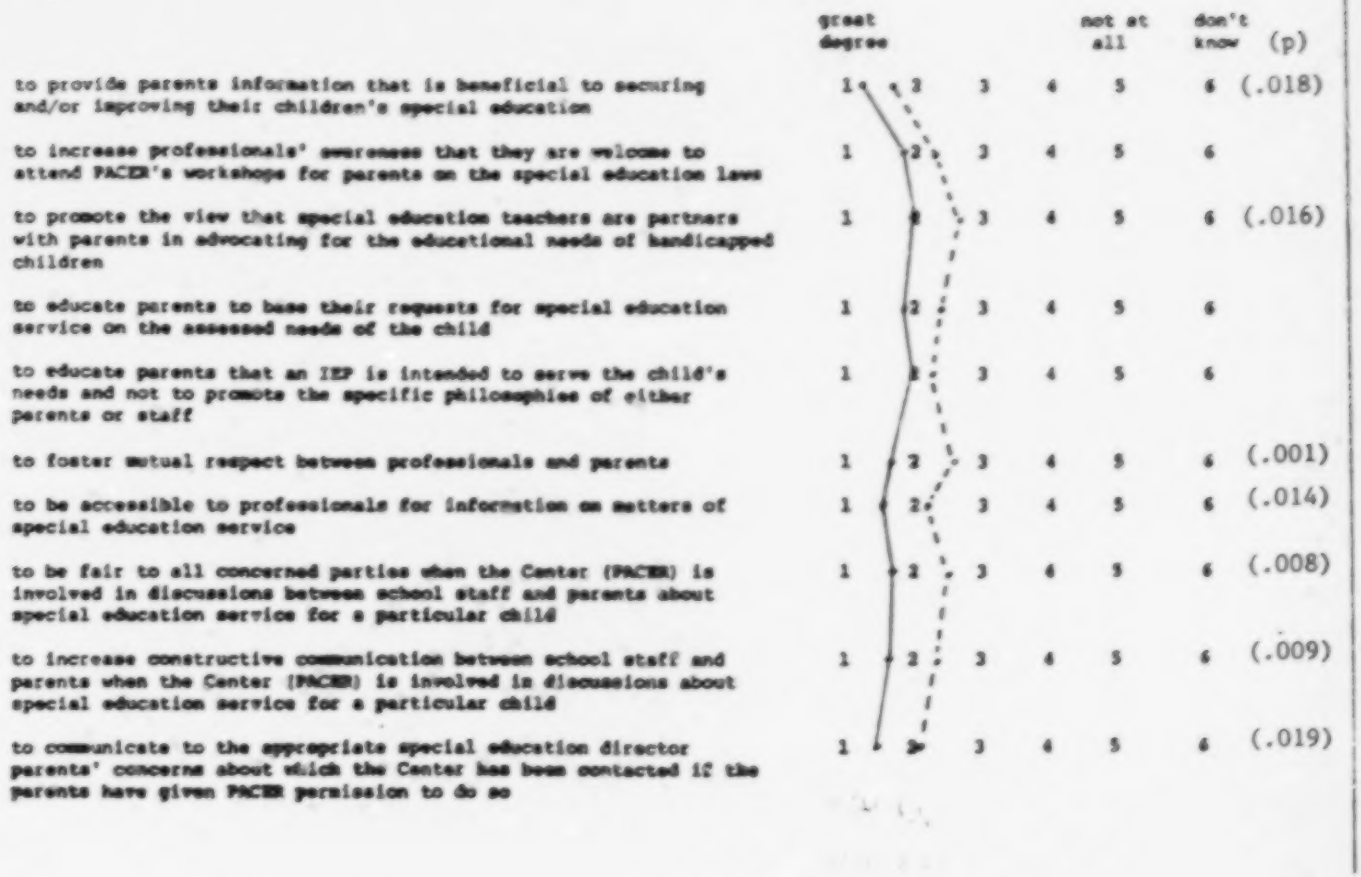
designed for parents who are slow learners; specific help for parents of E/BD and EMR children; aid in relieving parents of the extra demands on time resulting from having a handicapped child; training for parents to facilitate communicating their needs to teachers)
- information on what schools can realistically do for children
- information on specific handicapping conditions
- information on research proven educational strategies
- improvements in coordination between service agencies

Feedback on PACER Services

Another section of the survey gathered feedback on PACER's performance from only those directors who had had a PACER workshop in their district, who had attended a PACER workshop for parents, or who had been involved in district discussions with parents about special education service in which PACER had been a participant. The first question in this section listed 10 major objectives of PACER's workshops and advocacy activities, and asked directors to indicate on a five point scale their impression of the degree to which PACER had succeeded in meeting these objectives. The number of directors rating the 10 objectives ranged between 50 and 59. Metropolitan directors consistently rated PACER more successful in meeting its goals than did out-state directors, and for 7 of the 10 objectives, the difference in ratings between the two groups of directors was statistically significant. Figure 1 presents the mean responses for both groups of directors; the mean response was calculated using the first five categories of the response scale. Specific probabilities for those items on which the difference in ratings between the two groups was significant are included in the figure.

FIGURE 1

Mean Ratings of PACER's Activities by Metropolitan (—) and Out-State (- - -) Directors.


great degree
not at all
don't know
1
2
3
4
5
6
to provide parents information that is beneficial to securing and/or improving their children's special education (.018)
to increase professionals' awareness that they are welcome to attend PACER's workshops for parents on the special education laws
to promote the view that special education teachers are partners with parents in advocating for the educational needs of handicapped children (.016)
to educate parents to base their requests for special education service on the assessed needs of the child
to educate parents that an IEP is intended to serve the child's needs and not to promote the specific philosophies of either parents or staff
to foster mutual respect between professionals and parents (.001)
to be accessible to professionals for information on matters of special education service (.014)
to be fair to all concerned parties when the Center (PACER) is involved in discussions between school staff and parents about special education service for a particular child (.008)
to increase constructive communication between school staff and parents when the Center (PACER) is involved in discussions about special education service for a particular child (.009)
to communicate to the appropriate special education director parents' concerns about which the Center has been contacted if the parents have given PACER permission to do so (.019)

A second question in the feedback section asked directors who had had a PACER workshop presented in their district if there were any suggestions they would make for changes in the manner in which PACER makes advance contact and preparation for a workshop. Twenty-three directors responded to this item. Of these, 43% indicated they had no suggestions for change and 17% affirmed the methods that PACER employs. Taken from suggestions from the remaining 40% of persons responding to this item (9 directors) were actions that are already PACER policy. Two comments related to procedures not currently employed by PACER were:

- sending publicity information to building principals in addition to special education directors
- sending publication information to parents by mail rather than with the school child

Three questions in the feedback section were to be answered by directors who had attended a PACER workshop for parents. The first asked if there were any information they considered important for parents to receive that had not been included in the workshop. Sixteen directors responded to this item. Of these, 50% said no additional information needed to be included in the workshop. The remaining 50% (8 directors) gave specific suggestions, which were:

- provide names of local resources and contact people
- distribute parent information folders when available from the local district
- promote parental involvement in the classroom
- distinguish between appropriate and optimal special education
- foster a team approach between school and parent
- emphasize that disagreement between educator and parent is not synonomous with disinterest by the educator in the child's well-being
- reduce the complexity and scope of the material that is covered
- include the school district's perspective on educational issues

Another question to be answered by directors who had attended a PACER workshop for parents was: Do you have any suggestions for methods of increasing attendance at workshops by parents, professionals, or parents with limited educational backgrounds? Twenty directors responded to this item. Of these, 20% indicated they had no suggestions. The remaining 80% suggested the following:

- provide child-care
- arrange transportation pools
- assist with travel costs in out-state areas
- ask sponsoring groups or teachers to make personal phone contact with parents to urge attendance
- provide more than one time and location for a workshop
- request that former Governor Anderson, a friend of special education, include articles on PACER and its workshops in his multiple newspapers
- develop letters for teachers to sign that would urge parents to attend the workshops and would be sent home with the publicity flyers
- mail information about workshops directly to teachers
- contact directors for in-service dates to avoid schedule conflict
- involve principals in advocacy and provide workshops for principals only

- request inclusion of a PACER presentation on agendas for meetings of superintendants and principals
- focus on issues of local concern in workshops
- advertise clearly PACER's focus on student advocacy to offset possible interpretation of its efforts as harrassment of educational professionals

The final question directed to respondents who had attended a PACER workshop for parents was: How comfortable would you be requesting special education teachers in your district to urge their students' parents to attend the PACER workshop on special education laws? Fifty of the 55 responses (91%) to this question were clustered at the first two points of a five point scale that ranged from very comfortable to not at all comfortable. The overall mean response was 1.51; there was no significant difference between response means for out-state and metropolitan directors.

Two questions gathered information from directors who had been involved with PACER in district discussions between school staff and parents about special education service for a child. The first of these queried: Do you have any suggestions for PACER regarding methods of promoting constructive communication? Twenty four of the directors responded to this question. Of these, 21% indicated they had no suggestions to make, while 38% praised PACER for its efforts in promoting constructive communication (professional, objective, realistic, constructive, effective.) The remaining 42% provided the following suggestions/observations:

- PACER should request placement on the agendas for state conferences of regular education administrators
- PACER should encourage parents to disagree in a non-insulting manner
- PACER should not automatically assume the correctness of medical information
- PACER should contact school personnel and the director of special education, if parents approve, to gather their perspectives on a situation
- PACER should approach a discussion with an openness to both sides and without preconceived opinions based only on parents' concerns
- PACER should try to facilitate communication before demanding the mandated service
- PACER should foster cooperation by both sides in the discussion to reduce a "them vs us" atmosphere

The second question directed to respondents who had been involved with PACER in discussions about special education service for a child in their district was: How likely would you be to contact PACER for its opinion in a controversy with parents about their child's special education program? On a five point scale ranging from very likely to very unlikely, 76% of the 59 responses to this question were clustered between the first two points of the scale. The overall response mean for the question was 1.92; there was no significant difference between the response means of out-state and metropolitan directors.

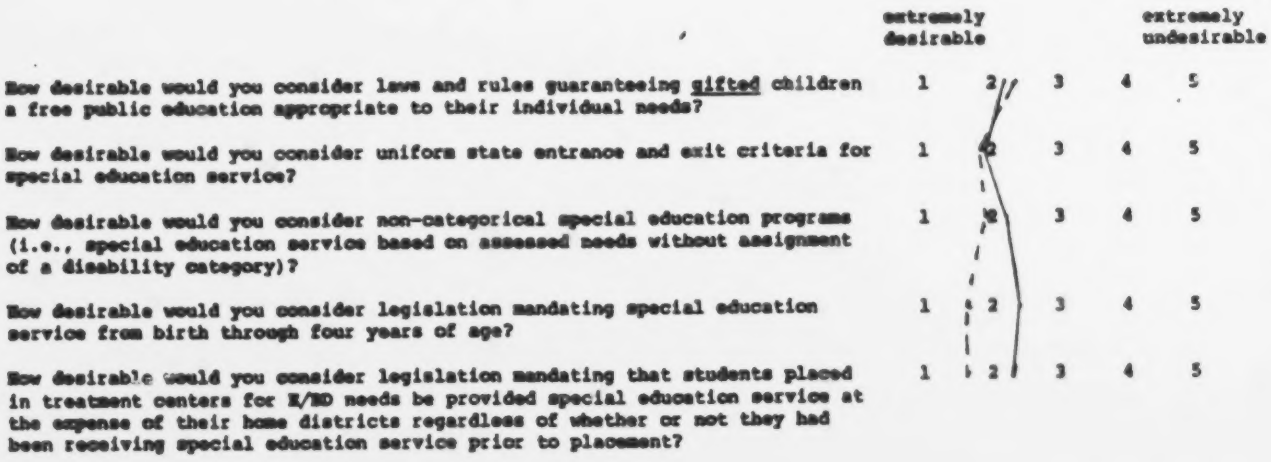
Opinions on Policy Changes

The remaining portion of the questionnaire was directed to all respondents and was intended to elicit opinions on the desirability and probability of potential

changes in educational mandates. Using a five point scale ranging from extremely desirable to extremely undesirable, the directors expressed their opinions on five educational revisions currently under discussion within Minnesota. Out-state directors considered four of the five revisions more desirable than did metropolitan directors, and for two of the revisions, the difference between the two groups was statistically significant (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Mean Rating on Possible Policy Revisions By Metropolitan (——) and Out-State (----) Directors.


extremely desirable
extremely undesirable
How desirable would you consider laws and rules guaranteeing gifted children a free public education appropriate to their individual needs?
How desirable would you consider uniform state entrance and exit criteria for special education service?
How desirable would you consider non-categorical special education programs (i.e., special education service based on assessed needs without assignment of a disability category)?
How desirable would you consider legislation mandating special education service from birth through four years of age?
How desirable would you consider legislation mandating that students placed in treatment centers for E/BD needs be provided special education service at the expense of their home districts regardless of whether or not they had been receiving special education service prior to placement?
1
2
3
4
5

Another question in this section asked: How likely is it that minimum competency testing will be a reality for regular education students in your district within the next three years? Eleven directors indicated they did not know. For the remaining directors, the mean overall response was 3.9 on a five point scale that ranged from extremely likely to extremely unlikely. There was no difference between the overall response means for the metropolitan and out-state directors.

DISCUSSION

Awareness and Use of PACER's Services

The generally high degree of familiarity with PACER's range of services throughout the state suggests that PACER's efforts over its six year of operation to make itself a visible organization within the special education community has been successful. Nearly univeral reported readership of the PACESETTER (96%) suggests a unique potential to affect directors not otherwise involved in PACER other activities. Other reported involvement by directors with PACER in in-service trainings, professional meetings, and college courses (92%) suggests these contacts as opportunities for PACER to affect persons with substantial influence in the education of handicapped children. Each of these contacts with directors should contain full and clear information on PACER's philosophy, the nature of its services and its willingness and availability to serve as a resource for professionals as well as parents. The stressing of such information could potentially increase the percentage of special education directors initiating contact with PACER through attendance at workshops, phone contact for information, or an invitation to PACER to be involved in district discussions concerning special education service delivery for a particular child. Although there is no level of involvement standard by which to judge the special education directors' participation, the reported involvement in these areas already seems remarkably high (e.g. 69% had called PACER for information, 58% had attended a PACER workshop.)

The nature of initiated contact with PACER differed between metropolitan and out-state directors. Despite the greater availability of workshops in their general geographic area, metropolitan directors attended workshops for parents on the special education laws in significantly fewer numbers (39%) than did out-state directors (73%). To the extent these causes reflect the nature of a metropolitan area, e.g. the availability of multiple sources of special education information and training, PACER should consider directing special attention to attracting metropolitan directors to its workshops. The metropolitan area contains the largest percentage of handicapped students within Minnesota, and increased involvement by educators in promoting attendance by parents at workshops would be of service in informing parents not reached by other PACER publicity efforts.

While metropolitan directors did not attend PACER workshops in large numbers, a very large percentage of them called PACER for information (84%) and were involved with PACER in district discussions of service delivery for a child (90%). Out-state directors in significantly fewer numbers called PACER (58%) or were involved with PACER in district discussions with parents (45%). The difference between out-state and metropolitan directors in these two areas is probably in large measure due to PACER's location in the metropolitan area which creates a differential ease of access to its services. PACER should pursue

obtaining a toll free phone number and publicize its availability in all areas of the state. Such a service would improve ease of access for parents who are the people most frequently initiating requests for PACER assistance. To date, a greater percentage of parents from the metropolitan area have requested this service from PACER than have out-state parents. The distance factor must also be considered in terms of PACER resources. Staff travel time to out-state areas for frequent involvement in district discussions of service delivery would be difficult. Alternative methods of involvement, such as conference calls or regional parent PACER representatives should be explored.

Feedback on PACER Services

Those special education directors who had had experience with a PACER workshop in their district, or who had been involved with PACER in a district discussion of special education service delivery rated the degree to which PACER's performance in these areas had reflected ten of its organizational objectives. It is significant that directors throughout the state concurred in rating PACER best in meeting what PACER staff identifies as its most important objective: providing parents information beneficial to securing and/or improving their child's special education. It is also important to note that absolute ratings on the five point scale were consistently positive for the ten objectives. In relative terms, however, out-state directors always rated PACER less favorably than metropolitan directors, and for 7 of the 10 objectives, the difference between the two groups was statistically significant (p .05)

Personal contact between educators and staff may be essential to a strongly positive perception of a parent training organization. Distance reduces such contact between out-state directors and PACER staff. To the extent that out-state directors and PACER staff may have less involvement or shared sense of purpose than would be desired, it would be useful for PACER to examine methods of improving the situation. It would not be appropriate to suggest that this is a pervasive problem, nor that relationships with directors should have precedence over serving the needs of parents. However, it may be beneficial for PACER to make efforts to increase personal contact with out-state directors, to familiarize themselves with operating contingencies particular to out-state areas, and to make out-state directors aware of all of their effects at establishing good communication channels.

One possible source for the differential rating of PACER's performance by out-state and metropolitan directors could be a difference in the point at which PACER is called to participate in parent/district discussions of special education service delivery. Because of lower awareness of PACER's services compared with metropolitan residents, out-state parents or educators may contact PACER as a last resort, at a point in discussions when positions are difficult to change. As parents are the usual party requesting PACER's involvement in district discussions, PACER could address this situation by specifically attempting to increase parental awareness of its services in out-state areas.

Future Directions

A statewide parent organization representing multiple disability groups, such as PACER, was considered an asset by surveyed directors. Respondents provided numerous observations on potential roles for such an organization in: advocating system change within special and regular education (e.g. 69% suggested involvement in efforts to improve the quality of regular education), in helping eliminate difficulties encountered by special education directors in providing appropriate education (e.g. 66% suggested provision for technical assistance to special educators), and in meeting the needs of parents of handicapped students (e.g. 51% suggested preparation of materials on the special education laws for parents with limited educational backgrounds). To a large extent these suggestions echo those made by parents and advocates, and they provide PACER important suggestions for future direction in program development.

STUDY 6

Study 6 involved a survey of special education teachers within the state of Minnesota. The focus of the questionnaire was the development and maintenance of working relationships between parents and special education teachers. Respondents were asked for their opinions on the helpfulness to parent-teacher interactions of behaviors considered important to informed parental involvement, and for their feedback on the degree to which PACER workshops for parents promoted cooperation and respect between parents and teachers.

METHOD

Instrument

After interviewing special education teachers, University of Minnesota College of Education staff, special education consultants in the field, and educational policy developers, the research coordinator devised the first draft of the questionnaire. This was reviewed for accuracy and relevancy to PACER objectives by PACER's co-directors, and revised to reflect their feedback. The questionnaire was then distributed for written comments to four members of the research advisory board, of whom three were special educators. In addition, the research coordinator met individually with three special education professionals to have them orally read and respond to the questionnaire. As a result of this editing process changes in content and construction were made, and the final version of the questionnaire was prepared (Appendix 6.)

Subjects

An effort was made to select a sample of respondents representative of the state's special education regions and categories of special education licensure. To develop this sample, PACER Center contacted the State Director of Special Education to request his approval and assistance in generating a list of names from the state's registry of special education teachers. In consultation with a State Department of Education data specialist, sample selection rules were developed that were compatible with the state's data collection and storage procedures.

Because of multiple licensures per individual, teacher category was determined by current (1984) assignment. Three categories (universes) were established for the sampling procedure. Each universe was scanned separately by means of a random number generator. Members of the first universe included all teachers employed a minimum of 10% time who were assigned to low incidence disability categories (Physical Handicap, Hearing Impairment, Vision Impairment, Autism, Other Health Impairments). Members of the second universe included teachers working more than 50% who were assigned to mid frequency disability categories (Speech, Educably Mentally Retarded, Trainably Mentally Retarded, Early Childhood, Emotional Disturbance.) Ten percent of the teacher names were randomly selected from each of these mid frequency disability categories except one: from early childhood, 25% of the names were generated because of the relatively fewer number of teachers within this category. Members of the third set included 7.5% of the full-time teachers working within Minnesota's highest disability category (Learning Disabled.) The total represented a non-duplicative count, and teachers from all 11 regions of the state were included in the sample in approximately the same proportion as their actual distribution throughout the state.

Procedure

As teacher home addresses are not necessarily updated except at time of license renewal (every five years), the teacher's school district of employment was identified by the State Department of Education. Six hundred fifteen questionnaires were sent in sealed, individually addressed envelopes to the district or the school in which the teacher was employed, with the request that they be distributed to the specific teachers within the district or the school. To insure the sample would include special education teachers who had attended PACER workshops for parents on the special education laws, 110 teachers who had attended PACER workshops throughout Minnesota in 1982-83 were directly sent questionnaires.

Included with all questionnaires was a cover letter briefly describing the purpose of the survey, a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and a form for requesting, at no charge, a copy of the newly revised Minnesota special education regulations, information on PACER programs, and/or brochures describing PACER for distribution to parents. As the survey was designed to be returned anonymously, no follow-up contact was possible to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

RESULTS

Four hundred and ten of the 725 questionnaires sent to special education teachers in Minnesota were completed, resulting in an overall return rate of 57%. Included with 83% of the returned surveys were requests for some or all of the available materials.

Teachers were asked to indicate in which of 11 areas of special education they were currently assigned. Three hundred and eighty three of the respondents answered this question. Responses were weighted to reflect 1984 State Department of Education figures on the number of teacher positions throughtout the state within each of the 11 areas of special education licensure. All statistics and data analyses are based on these weighted responses.

One hundred ninety five (51%) of the 383 weighted returns were from out-state teachers and 188 (49%), from metropolitan teachers. Fifty-five of the respondents (14%) had attended a PACER workshop for parents on the special education laws; of these, 36 teachers were from out-state districts and 19, from the metropolitan area.

Characteristics

Respondents were asked for demographic information on the number of years they had taught special education students, on the age of the students they were currently teaching, and on the level of special education service at which students they were currently teaching were being served. In examining these data for differences in responses between teachers who had attended PACER workshops for parents on the special education laws and teachers who had not, the only difference of note was the significantly ($p \leq .05$) greater percentage of workshop attendees than non-attendees serving students 4-6 years of age.

Teachers were asked to specify from which of five sources they had received information on the special education laws. There was a statistically significant difference between the percentage of PACER workshop attendees and non-attendees indicating each of the five as a source of information (Table 1). More workshop attendees than non-attendees received information from sources for which the recipient has to initiate contact to receive specific information.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Respondents by Group Indicating Each Entry as a Source of Information on the Special Education Laws.

	workshop attendees	workshop non-attendees	(p)
college course	61%	74%	(.045)
district in-service	73%	87%	(.033)
state department of education	69%	55%	(.053)
disability group	31%	12%	(.004)
parent advocacy organization	55%*	10%	(.000)

*Technically, 100% of workshop attendees should have indicated parent advocacy organization as a source of information

Teachers were asked to indicate what percentage of their students' parents, on the average, attended their child's IEP planning meeting. Seventy-three percent of the respondents overall indicated that between 75-100% of their students' parents attended the IEP planning meeting. There was a statistically significant difference (x^2=19.85, df=3,p=.002) in the reported percentage of metropolitan and out-state parents attending IEP planning meetings (Table 2).

TABLE 2

Percentage of Respondents by Location Indicating Each Percent Range of Parent Attendance at IEP Planning Meetings.

	Out-State	Metropolitan
0-25%	5%	15%
26-50%	4%	6%
51-75%	8%	16%
75-100%	84%	64%

Attitudes on Parent Participation

Teachers were asked their opinions on 20 aspects of informed parental involvement in a child's special education program. Using a five point scale, respondents indicated whether they considered specific behaviors beneficial or detrimental to constructive parental involvement. A sixth response option - 'inappropriate for my students' - was provided for each of the 20 entries; this response was not included in calculations of response means.

The overall mean response for each of the 20 items fell within the first two categories - 'always beneficial' and 'sometimes beneficial' - on the five point scale. Teachers who had attended a PACER workshop rated 16 of the 20 parental behaviors more favorably than did teachers who had not attended a workshop; for seven of the 16 items, the difference between the two groups was statistically signficiant (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Mean Ratings of Components of Parental Participation (* indicates items rated more favorably by workshop attendees; probability levels for statistically significant differences are indicated.)

(P)			Always Beneficial	Sometimes Beneficial	Neither Beneficial nor Detrimental	Sometimes Detrimental	Always Detrimental	Inappropriate for My Students
	*	observe and record their child's behavior at home	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	keep a running file of school materials related to their child (performance records, notes from staff, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(.008)	*	observe their child in class	1	2	3	4	5	6
		discuss with teacher(s) between IEP meetings about their child's performance, whether good or problematic, at home and at school	1	2	3	4	5	6
		communicate in writing to the teacher major concerns or disagreements with their child's school program	1	2	3	4	5	6
		familiarize themselves with standardized tests or other behavioral measurements used in formally assessing their child (what they test, how they test, the relation of results to educational programming)	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	review formal assessment results for how accurately and comprehensively they reflect their child's strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5	6
		familiarize themselves <u>before</u> going to the IEP meeting with class performance information and/or current formal assessment data.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(.006)	*	define their evolving short- and long-range goals for their child	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	invite a support person (friend, advocate, professional) to accompany them to the IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(.006)	*	familiarize themselves with the rights guaranteed their child and themselves by the special education laws	1	2	3	4	5	6
(.021)	*	familiarize themselves with what should be included in an IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	familiarize themselves with the concept of writing IEP goals in behaviorally measurable terms	1	2	3	4	5	6
(.008)	*	ask questions about what they do not understand and discuss/debate ideas with which they disagree during an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	make suggestions about what should be included as goals and objectives during an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(.025)	*	recognize that a special education teacher has a responsibility to serve the assessed needs of all students equally well	1	2	3	4	5	6
(.004)	*	familiarize themselves with criteria for judging the quality (performance outcome measures) of their child's special education program	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	recognize that in addition to the quantity of special education service, the child's performance results must be considered in judging a program's appropriateness	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	familiarize themselves with the positive and negative effects of direct special education service (levels III-VI) and indirect service (levels I-II)	1	2	3	4	5	6
	*	familiarize themselves with the positive and negative effects of their child's being taught academic,						

Teachers were asked to indicate for which of those components of parent participation they had rated 'always beneficial' or 'sometimes beneficial' they judged the majority of their students' parents to be in need of information or training (Table 3). The component for which respondents most frequently indicated parents needed training was familiarity with the concept of writing IEP goals in behaviorally measurable terms.

TABLE 3

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Need for Parent Information/Training.

observe and record their child's behavior at home	51%
keep a running file of school materials related to their child (performance records, notes from staff, etc.)	24%
observe their child in class	27%
discuss with teacher(s) between IEP meetings about their child's performance, whether good or problematic, at home and at school	16%
communicate in writing to the teacher major concerns or disagreements with their child's school program	24%
familiarise themselves with standardised tests or other behavioral measurements used in formally assessing their child (what they test, how they test, the relation of results to educational programming)	75%
review formal assessment results for how accurately and comprehensively they reflect their child's strengths and weaknesses	71%
familiarise themselves before going to the IEP meeting with class performance information and/or current formal assessment data.	63%
define their evolving short- and long-range goals for their child	53%
invite a support person (friend, advocate, professional) to accompany them to the IEP meeting	19%
familiarise themselves with the rights guaranteed their child and themselves by the special education laws	69%
familiarise themselves with what should be included in an IEP	77%
familiarise themselves with the concept of writing IEP goals in behaviorally measurable terms	83%
ask questions about what they do not understand and discuss/debate ideas with which they disagree during an IEP meeting	31%
make suggestions about what should be included as goals and objectives during an IEP meeting	52%
recognise that a special education teacher has a responsibility to serve the assessed needs of all students equally well	30%
familiarise themselves with criteria for judging the quality (performance outcome measures) of their child's special education program	72%
recognise that in addition to the quantity of special education service, the child's performance results must be considered in judging a program's appropriateness	47%
familiarise themselves with the positive and negative effects of direct special education service (levels III-VI) and indirect service (levels I-II)	66%
familiarise themselves with the positive and negative effects of their child's being taught academic, vocational and/or independent living skills	63%

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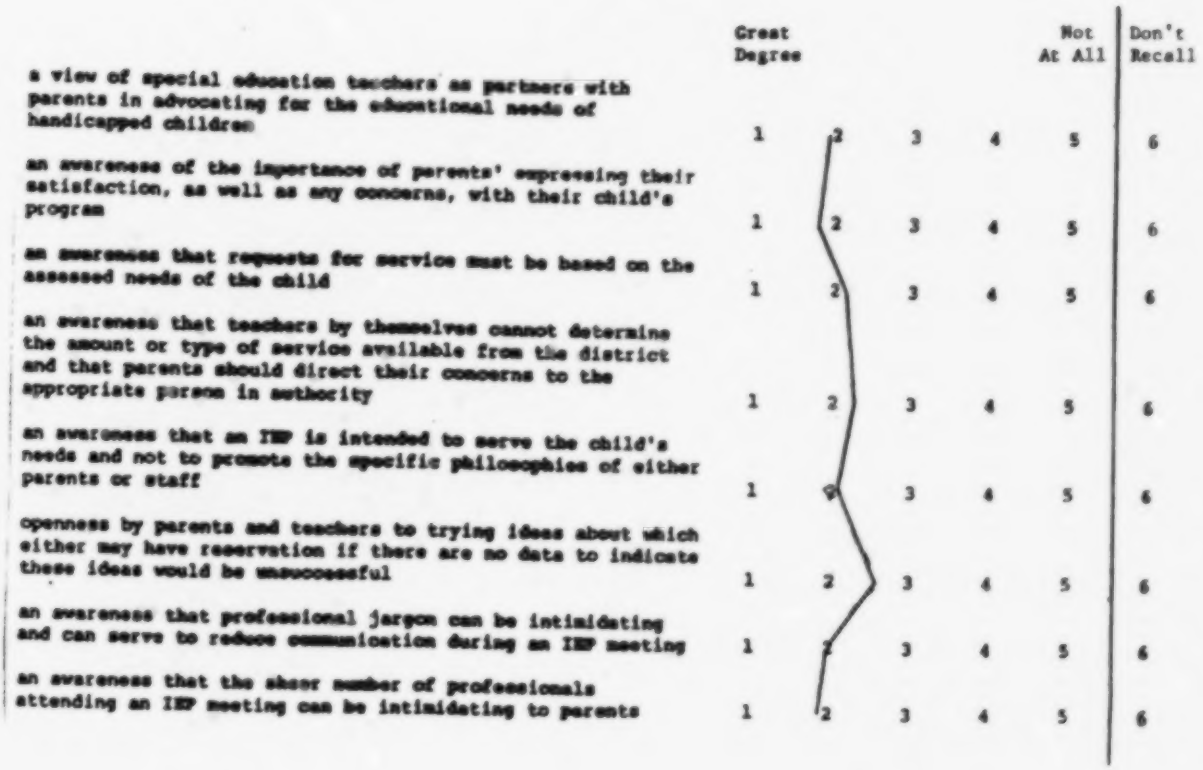
Feedback on PACER Workshop

Fifty-five respondents had attended a PACER workshop for parents on the special education laws. Using a five point scale, these respondents rated the degree to which the PACER workshop had promoted various aspects of constructive working relationships between parents and school staff. The response option - 'don't recall' - was available for each item; this response was not included for calculations of response means.

The overall mean rating for each item fell within the first 3 points on the 5 point scale (Figure 2). Teachers felt the PACER workshop(s) they had attended were most effective in promoting an awareness of the importance of parents' expressing their satisfaction, as well as their concerns, with their child's program, and least effective in promoting an openness by parents and teachers to trying ideas about which either might have unsubstantiated reservation.

FIGURE 2

Mean Ratings of Workshop.


Great Degree
Not At All
Don't Recall
a view of special education teachers as partners with parents in advocating for the educational needs of handicapped children
an awareness of the importance of parents' expressing their satisfaction, as well as any concerns, with their child's program
an awareness that requests for service must be based on the assessed needs of the child
an awareness that teachers by themselves cannot determine the amount or type of service available from the district and that parents should direct their concerns to the appropriate person in authority
an awareness that an IEP is intended to serve the child's needs and not to promote the specific philosophies of either parents or staff
openness by parents and teachers to trying ideas about which either may have reservation if there are no data to indicate these ideas would be unsuccessful
an awareness that professional jargon can be intimidating and can serve to reduce communication during an IEP meeting
an awareness that the sheer number of professionals attending an IEP meeting can be intimidating to parents
1
2
3
4
5
6

DISCUSSION

Four aspects of participation that teachers rated as most beneficial to constructive involvement by parents in a child's special education program are ones receiving primary emphasis at PACER parent training workshops. Two concern knowledge (familiarity with the rights guaranteed a handicapped child and his/her parents by the special education laws; familiarity with what should be included in an IEP), and two concern process (asking questions about what is not understood and discussing ideas about which there is disagreeement during an IEP meeting; making suggestions about what should be included as goals and objectives during an IEP meeting). Teachers' high ratings of knowledge as beneficial to parental participation, combined with the large percentages of teachers indicating a need for parent training in the law (69%) and in what should be included in an IEP (77%), strongly reinforce PACER's continuing provision throughout the state of basic workshops on the mandates of the special education laws.

Teachers who had attended a PACER workshop for parents on the special education laws rated each of the four aspects of parental involvement discussed above more favorably than did teachers who had not attended such a workshop. The difference in ratings between the two groups of teachers on three of the four items was at a statistically signficiant ($p \leq .05$) level. This positive difference in viewpoint between workshop attendees and non-attendees, combined with the small percentage of repondents overall who had attended a PACER workshop (14% of 383), suggest that PACER should attempt to attract greater numbers of teachers to its parent training workshops.

Several aspects of parent participation rated as important to constructive parent involvement by teachers can be considered 'second generation' behaviors. That is, they are premised upon an awareness by parents of a right to be involved in the IEP process and a commitment to do so. These behaviors include observing and recording a child's behavior at home, defining evolving short- and long-range goals for a child, being familiar with positive and negative aspects of direct and indirect special education service, and being familiar with positive and negative aspects of academic, vocational and/or independent living skills curricula. Information and training relevant to these skills have not been included by PACER in parent training workshops. The high ratings for value to constructive parental participation given these behaviors by teachers, combined with data from 73% of the respondents overall indicating that 75-100% of their students' parents attend IEP meetings, suggest that PACER should begin to address the training of these skills.

The preponderant finding from this survey of special education teachers was the consistently favorable rating given by respondents to what can be considered assertive behaviors by parents in their interactions with teachers concerning their child's special education program. There was no evidence of opposition to the concept of informed parental involvement in the special education process. It may be the case that these results are a partial function of who chose to complete the questionnaire: teachers sympathetic to active parental involvement. It is probably more the case that five years after compliance procedures for P.L. 94-142 were put into effect, the role of parents in the special education process is assumed. The important point for PACER, however, is that professionals support a range of parental participation compatible with PACER's philosophy on parent involvement in the special education process. The groundwork for cooperation is clearly in place.

Feedback on PACER Workshop

Fifty-five respondents had attended a PACER workshop for parents on the special education laws. They provided positive feedback overall on the degree to which the workshop had promoted attitudes and behaviors important to a constructive working relationship between parents and teachers. The workshop was rated best in promoting awareness of factors affecting interactional quality: parents' viewing teachers as partners in advocating for the educatonal needs of a handicapped child; parents' expressing satisfaction, as well as concern, with a child's program; and professionals' being aware of the intimidating effects on parents of educational jargon and superior numbers in IEP meetings. The workshop was rated effective, but relatively less so, in explaining the bases for, and methods of, requesting special education service: parents' basing requests for service on assessed needs of the child; parents' directing requests for unavailable service to the appropriate person in authority; and parents' and professionals' being open to ideas about which either might have unsubstantiated reservation. PACER should address its attention to these observations as they pertain to strategies important for parents in obtaining special education service for their child.

INTRODUCTION

Early in its history PACER was funded to assist formation of other parent training organizations, and it was involved in the Dissemin/Action Project through which a booklet decribing PACER's organizational structure and its parent training programs was prepared. This pamphlet and samples of operating forms, management materials and public service announcements were made available to fledgling special education parent training organizations throughout the country. Another source of contact with parent organizations has been PACER's membership in the National Network of Parent Centers, a networking system for the discussion of mutual concerns and the dissemination of materials. An increasing emphasis on the role of parent training organizations in special education is evidenced in the newly created and federally funded Technical Assistance for Parent Projects (TAPP) program. PACER is the midwest regional center within this project, the purpose of which is to make available technical assistance to newly established parent training organizations. The involvement of PACER in this project increases the importance of evaluating the usefulness of materials it disseminates and of gathering feedback from organizations on current and anticipated needs for new materials and technical assistance programs. Study 7 addressed the need for evaluative feedback and materials development information. It surveyed parent organizations that had been in contact with PACER during the preceeding five years for moral support, funding information, organizational management policies and/or program materials.

METHOD

Potential content of the questionnaire was discussed with PACER's co-directors, who subsequently reviewed the form for accuracy and relevancy. The questionnaire (Appendix 7) was mailed in June 1984, to 18 persons selected by PACER's co-directors from organizations that had had substantive contact with PACER during the preceeding five years. Enclosed with the questionnaire was a brief description of the evaluation grant, a request for cooperation, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. No follow-up phone calls were made to elicit unreturned questionnaires.

RESULTS

Sixteen questionnaires (89%) were completed and returned.

Characteristics

Respondents were asked to define the nature of their organization. Ranked in order of frequency, responses were:

parent coalition	50%
parent support group	19%
organization representing a specific disability	6%
parent organization affiliated with state department of education	6%
organization of disabled adults	6%
parent/consumer and provider coalition	6%
volunteer advocacy organization	6%
coalition of multiple disability organizations	6%

Ninety-four percent of the organizations operated with a board of directors or an advisory board, and parents were the majority membership on 73% of these boards.

Individual contributions constituted the source of funding most frequently cited by respondents, with federal and state Department of Education funds both being the next most frequently listed (Table 1). No organization used a set client fee.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Source of Organizational Funding.

federal Department of Education funds	38%	corporate funds	6%
other federal funds	19%	individual contributions	50%
state Department of Education funds	38%	client fees	0%
other state funds	31%	dues	18%
local school districts funds	6%	donations for training sessions	6%
other local funds	13%	charitable gambling	6%
foundation funds	31%		

One organization owned its own building, while 56% of the organizations rented office space. The site of operation for 25% of the groups was a home, and for 13%, donated space from a disabilty organization. Thirty-eight percent of the organizations supported full-time staff, ranging in number from 1-10; 56% used part-time paid staff, ranging from 1-17 people; and 94% had the assistance of 4-400 volunteers.

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of parents served by their organizations during the prior 12 month period. Two of the respondents listed this information as unknown, while the remaining responses ranged in number from 8-5000, with the median response being 300 parents. Nineteen percent of the respondents listed publicity methods or written materials their organizations had developed for reaching parents with little involvement in their child's special education. These included: a parent guide with its information presented on two reading levels; face-to-face direct outreach in rural areas; and extensive media coverage highlighting local resources, local co-sponsors of training, and local special education issues.

Feedback

Ninety-four percent of the respondents indicated that, based on the usefulness of information they had already received from PACER, they would be 'extremely likely' to contact PACER again for information in the future. Using a five point scale ranging from extremely useful (1) to not at all useful (5), respondents rated individual materials they had received from PACER. Any one organization had received only those materials appropriate to its needs. Table 2 lists the materials in order of frequency of receipt by organizations and then lists for each resource the mean rating it received for usefulness.

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Receipt of Each Resource, and Mean Rating of Each Resource for Usefulness.

Parents Can Be The Key (handbook for parents describing special education laws and procedures)	100%	(1.20)
parent workshop packet on special education laws	87%	(1.36)
PACESETTER (PACER's general newsletter)	87%	(1.23)
workshop packet for training parent trainers	81%	(1.33)
ADVOCATE (PACER's subscription newsletter)	81%	(1.00)
evaluation report (report describing goals and structure of each PACER project)	69%	(1.42)
Unlocking Doors (booklet for parents to improve assertiveness and communication skills)	69%	(1.17)
parent workshop packet on communication skills	62%	(1.36)
Parents Ask PACER (collection of frequently asked questions about special education issues)	56%	(1.40)
Parents Training Parents (handbook describing PACER programs and organizational structure for use in replication)	56%	(1.40)
overhead transparencies to accompany parent training workshop on special education laws	44%	(1.43)
Parents Can Be the Key (bilingual Spanish/English edition)	37%	(1.40)
information on funding sources	37%	(1.5)
operating forms (intake telephone sheets, workshop planning check lists, etc.)	31%	(1.2)
evaluation forms and procedures	25%	(1.5)
sample workshop flyers	25%	(1.0)
COUNT ME IN Resource Manual (handicap awareness puppet program for volunteer puppeteers and teachers)	25%	(1.2)
Parents Ask PACER (bilingual Spanish/English edition)	19%	(1.0)
COUNT ME IN Secondary Supplement (handicap awareness puppet program appropriate to secondary level students)	19%	(1.25)
Handbook for Coordinators (guide for setting up handicap awareness programs)	19%	(1.0)
Disabled?...Yes; Able?...Also, Yes (stories about teens with handicapping conditions)	19%	(1.0)
management materials (bylaws, personnel policies, etc.)	19%	(1.25)
sample public service announcements	19%	(1.0)
tranparencies to accompany parent workshop on communication skills	12%	(2.0)

The questionnaire contained a list of possible services an organization could offer parents of handicapped students or professionals serving handicapped students. Respondents were asked to check which of these services their organization provided and to indicate if PACER materials had been incorporated (complete originals, partial reproductions, modified versions) into the service. Table 3 lists the services in order of the frequency with which organizations were reported offering them, and lists the percentage of providers of any particular service that had incorporated PACER materials.

TABLE 3

Percentage of Respondents Providing Each Service, and Percentage of Providers of Each Incorporating PACER Materials.

	Percentage Providing Service	Percentage Incorporating Materials
individual assistance and training for parents provided over the phone	87%	71%
workshops on special education laws	81%	100%
newsletter mailed to parents and others	75%	100%
special education information provided to professionals involved with handicapped youth	69%	80%
workshops on communication and assertiveness skills	62%	100%
workshop to train parent trainers	56%	100%
individual assistance for parents, provided in-person, e.g. accompanying parents to IEP meetings	56%	56%
workshops on special education laws for specific groups, e.g. parents with hearing impaired children	50%	75%
workshops on topical issues in special education e.g. minimum competency testing, performance criteria, etc.	37%	50%
handicap awareness programs in schools or community settings	31%	100%

Information for Future Planning

Respondents were asked to indicate what materials or information would be most helpful to their organization at the present time and in the near future. Only suggestions for materials or information not currently available from PACER are reported.

- strategies for identifying and serving parents least informed about special education mandates
- bilingual editions of special education regulations
- descriptions of special education services provided in various states
- information on national trends in special education and in parent training
- strategies for affecting bureaucratic decision making at all levels
- guidelines for establishing state-wide parent networks
- case studies of the resolution of disagreements between parents and school staff on special education service delivery
- informaton on successful models for providing preschool and vocational special education
- information on successful rural special education service delivery systems
- methods of raising public awareness of issues and needs related to handicapped and chronically and seriously ill children

In response to an item asking respondents' opinions on what issues in special education their organization would likely have to address in future parent services, the following ideas were offered:

- multicategorical programming
- entrance/exit criteria; preventative or remedial service for borderline children
- education of the chronically and seriously ill child
- preschool, transition, and vocational services and program planning
- implementation of the IEP; evaluation of the quality of special education
- new models of secondary special education
- respite care

- special and regular education teacher pre-service/in-service training and certification standards

- surrogate parent training

- identification of, and service for, high risk and difficult to reach parents

- improved parent training for involvement in a child's special education; parent training on accessing available resources

- vocational program planning

- improved parent/professional partnerships; advanced communication skills training

- parent support systems; parent advocacy councils

- coordination of services between school and other agencies serving the handicapped; interagency agreements

DISCUSSION

The organizations represented by respondents varied from one another on a number of dimensions. Descriptions of the organizations sampled ranged from an organization representing a specific disability to a parent/consumer and provider coalition. The groups varied in the number of paid staff they employed (0-17), and in the number of parents they had served in the prior 12 month period (8-5,000). Regardless of differences in affiliation or size, all of the organizations had been able to use PACER as a resource for information and materials. Ninety-four percent of the respondents indicated that, based on the usefulness of the information they had already received, they would be extremely likely to contact PACER again.

The survey contained a list of materials PACER has available for distribution. All 24 of the items on the list had been received by one or more of the organizations, and ratings of the materials on a five pont scale for usefulness ranged between 1.0 and 2.0. The extensiveness of the materials developed by PACER, their rated usefulness by a spectrum of parent organizations, and the impact of indirect service beyond the normal geographic boundaries and target population sizes directly served by PACER make this a valuable service that PACER should continue to provide.

A list of PACER's major programs (as of 1983) was included in the survey and respondents were asked to indicate if their organization offered a similiar service and if any of PACER's materials were incorporated, whole or in part, into the delivery of the service. Each of the listed programs was provided by 31-87% of the organizations, and the percentage of organizations incorporating PACER materials into the provision of a given service ranged between 50-100%. That is, of those parent organizations offering a service similar to one offered by PACER, from one-half to all of them had incorporated PACER materials into that service. Data were not collected on reasons organizations offered particular programs, or

on reasons relevant PACER materials were modified or not used in the provision of a service. What programs an organization offers is largely a function of available financial resources and needs in the state, region or local area. To the degree, however, that programming and materials decisions reflect differentially perceived needs or particular skills and concerns of organizational staff, they are of educational value to other organizations. It might be to PACER's benefit to explore with the respondents sampled in this survey the rationales for differing program development decisions. To facilitate gathering further information on the applicability of PACER materials, a questionnaire could be included with materials sent to an organization requesting feedback on the materials' limitations and on modifications or additions necessary to address local needs. The high acceptance of these materials by the current respondents in light of normal variations among organizations and of the natural tendency to do things one's own way is quite notable.

FUTURE NEEDS

Respondents were asked what materials or information would be most helpful to their organizations at the present time and in the near future. Many of their responses indicated needs similiar to those reported elsewhere in this report by parents, advocates and educators within Minnesota. Among these are included information on exemplary models for rural special education service delivery, descriptions of currently available special education programs, information and strategies for developing vocational special education programs, and strategies for identifying and serving parents least informed about special education mandates. To favorably influence the cost/benefit ratio of future program and materials development, PACER might well focus on addressing the needs that are shared by its Minnesota clients and its organizational counterparts throughout the country. PACER might also build on the reciprocity evident in this evaluation and on the organizational potential available through the new TAPP program to gather and examine programs and materials developed elsewhere for application in Minnesota. For example, 19% of survey respondents indicated their organizations had already developed strategies and materials for reaching parents least informed about special education laws, a group that PACER should also be increasing its efforts to reach.

Respondents offered opinions on issues in special education they thought their organizations would have to address in future parent services. Again, there was a similarity in views between respondents completing this survey and persons answering similar questions in other portions of this evaluation. Some of the suggested future concerns include: multicategorical special education programming, entrance and exit criteria for special education service, and preparation and training of regular education teachers for work with mainstreamed handicapped students. Because of mutual concerns over these issues within parent organizations, PACER might seek to stimulate a national parent organization initiative in one of these areas. PACER's membership and position in a national network of parent organizations provides it the opportunity to give and receive ideas and assistance (exchange essential to any organization's continuing flexibility and creativity) and to exert leadership in developing concerted efforts among parent projects.

STUDY 8

Since its inception, PACER Center has gathered feedback on its services, either immediately subsequent to their provision and/or retrospectively at the end of the fiscal year in which they had been provided. Study 8 examines these data beginning with the 1978-1979 fiscal year and extending through the 1982-1983 fiscal year for long-term information on the characteristics of the population served by PACER, on sources from which people learned of PACER, and on feedback provided on PACER services rendered.

Sources of Information About PACER.

On evaluation forms completed immediately subsequent to PACER's Levels II and III workshops on the special education laws, and in telephone surveys of persons who had used PACER's Level V individual training and assistance service, respondents indicated their source(s) of referral for the particular PACER service. Column totals in Table 1 reflect the fact that some respondents reported more than one source of information about a PACER service.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Each Source of Information about PACER's Levels II, III and V Services.

LEVEL V Individual Training and Assistance	78-79	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83
Advocacy organization	18%	21%	18%	20%	23%
PACER workshop	13%	20%	10%	17%	15%
School personnel	18%	16%	15%	14%	14%
Agencies serving handicapped	11%	9%	10%	14%	12%
Friends	2%	5%	13%	12%	12%
PACER staff/board	13%	7%	4%	6%	7%
TV/radio	11%	7%	19%	8%	6%
Other	—	4%	2%	2%	6%
Newspaper	7%	3%	2%	3%	3%
PACER brochure/newsletter/ speech	8%	8%	7%	6%	2%
LEVEL II - III Workshops					
PACER	—	4%	24%	28%	34%
Flyer from school	35%	31%	30%	32%	27%
Friend	9%	11%	15%	17%	17%
Flyer from other organizations	—	—	16%	15%	14%
Other	18%	30%	16%	11%	10%
Parent group	25%	17%	10%	16%	8%
Newspaper	10%	16%	14%	11%	8%
Radio/TV	2%	5%	8%	5%	3%
PACER flyer	6%	9%	—	—	—

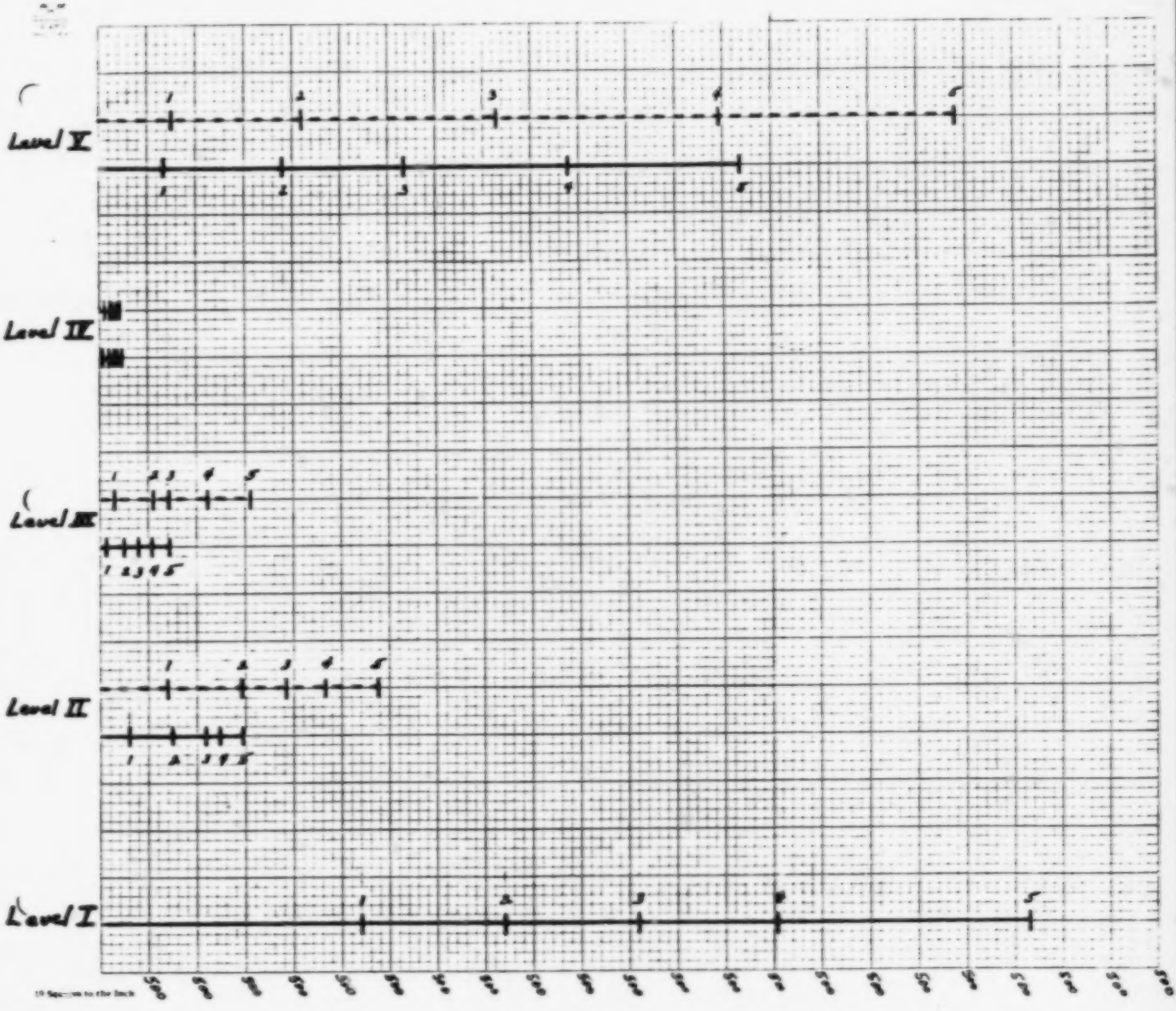
In all five years, more than 50% of the indicated sources of referral were agencies or persons serving the handicapped: advocacy organizations other than PACER, PACER itself through one of its workshops, school personnel, and other agencies within Minnesota serving the handicapped. PACER provides advocacy organizations and other service agencies informational releases for inclusion in newsletters, and provides PACER program brochures for distribution by these organizations and by school personnel. The percentage of persons indicating the media (newspaper, television, radio) as a source of information was relatively low except for 1980-1981 in which approximately one-fifth of the respondents reported TV/radio as a referral source.

The newspaper was a more frequent source of information for Levels II and III workshops than for Level V service, though its relative ranking within referral source for Levels II and III services was still low. PACER's own information - Level V individual training and assistance or PACER brochures sent home from school - was the source of over 50% of the workshop referrals in each of the last three survey years. A PACER workshop flyer sent home from school was consistently reported over time as a source of information by one-third of the respondents, while the frequency with which parent groups were reported as a source of information on workshops declined over the five years.

Figure 1 allows comparison of the relative numbers of parents and professionals using a particular level of PACER service, using different levels of PACER's services, and using PACER's services over the year. Parents include natural parents and relatives of handicapped children, foster parents, and group home houseparents. Professionals include school district and regional educational personnel, and members of other agencies serving the handicapped.

FIGURE 1

Numbers of Parents and Professionals Using PACER's Services. (---- parents; —— professionals; 1 = 1978-79, 2 = 1979-80, 3 = 1980-81, 4 = 1981-82, 5 = 1982-83; 1/2 inch = 500 units).

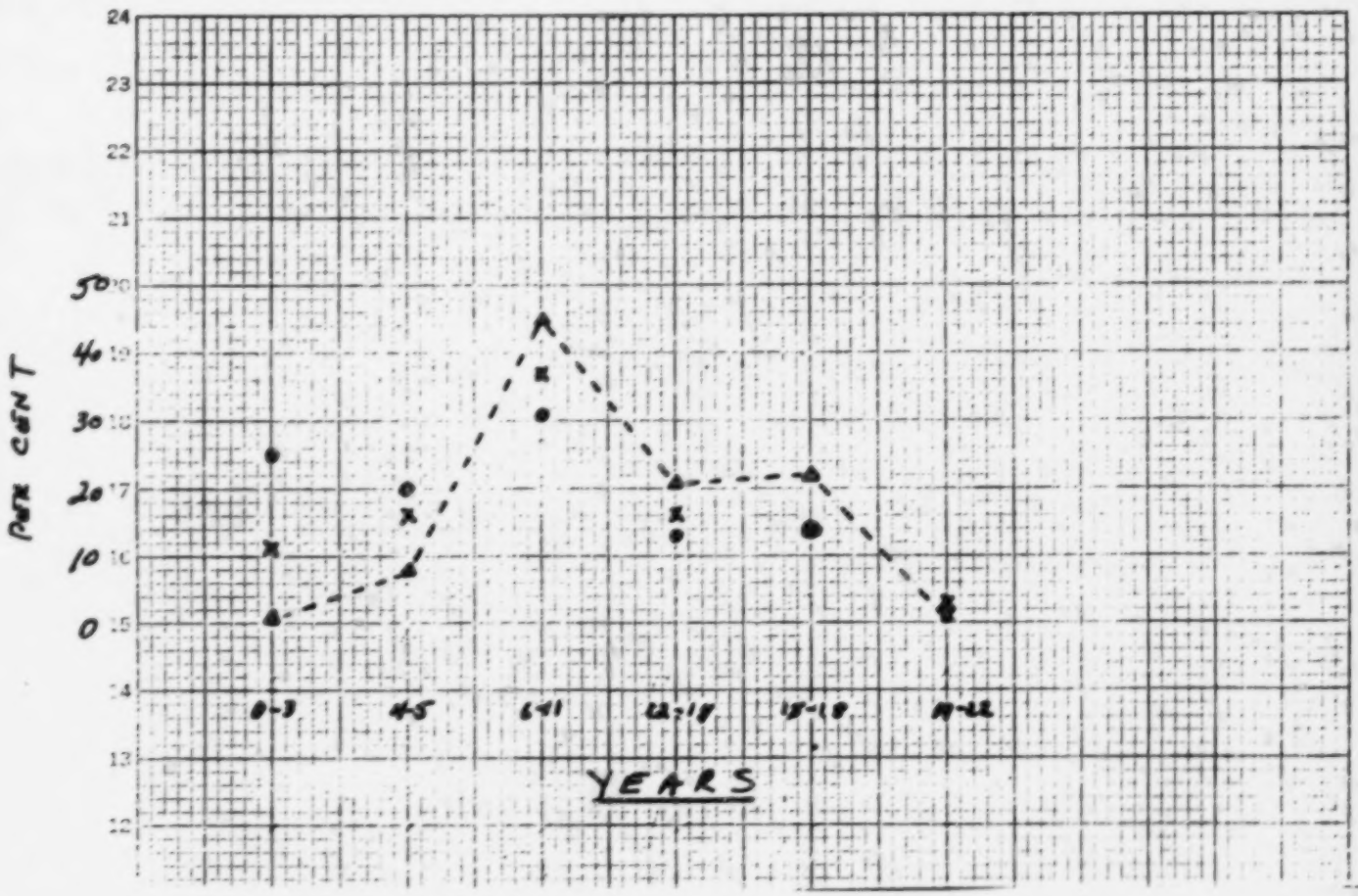


The numbers represented by the graph for Level I service were persons attendi: meetings at which PACER presented information about the Center's programs and e parental role in special education. Populations addressed included medical a educational professionals, business leaders, university students, and members f educational regulatory agencies. The number of Level II workshops on the special education laws PACER presents each year has decreased over time, and the average number of persons attending has fluctuated randomly between 31 and 43. The number of Level III workshops for specific sub-populations of parents of handicapped children has increased over the five year period, and the average number of persons attending each workshop has slightly and steadily decreased from 24 to 18. The ratio of parents to professionals attending Levels II and III workshops on the special education laws was roughly 2:1. The graph for Level V service represents total number of phone contacts with PACER rather than total number of persons served: each call to PACER by any one person was counted separately. Only contacts by persons categorized in PACER's year-end evaluations as 'parents' and 'professionals' are included in the graph for Level V service. This figure does not include contacts categorized under 'advocate organizations' and 'others'; these two categories constituted an average of 24% of total Level V contacts during the last four fiscal years.

Figure 2 shows the ages of handicapped children served by PACER through th parents in comparison with the ages of all handicapped children receiving cial education service within Minnesota. Data are drawn from parents attending PACER's Level II and Level III workshops and using its Level V individual training and assistance service. The percentage of parents with children in a specific age range are averaged across five years. Data for the state of Minnesota represent an average of demographic information collected during 1980, 1981 and 1982.

FIGURE 2

The Percentage of Parents Using PACER's Levels II, III and V Services Over Five Years Having Children in Specific Age Ranges, and the Percentage of All Handicapped Children Receiving Special Education Service in Minnesota in Specific Age Ranges (0 = Level II and III; x = Level V; Δ = MN.)

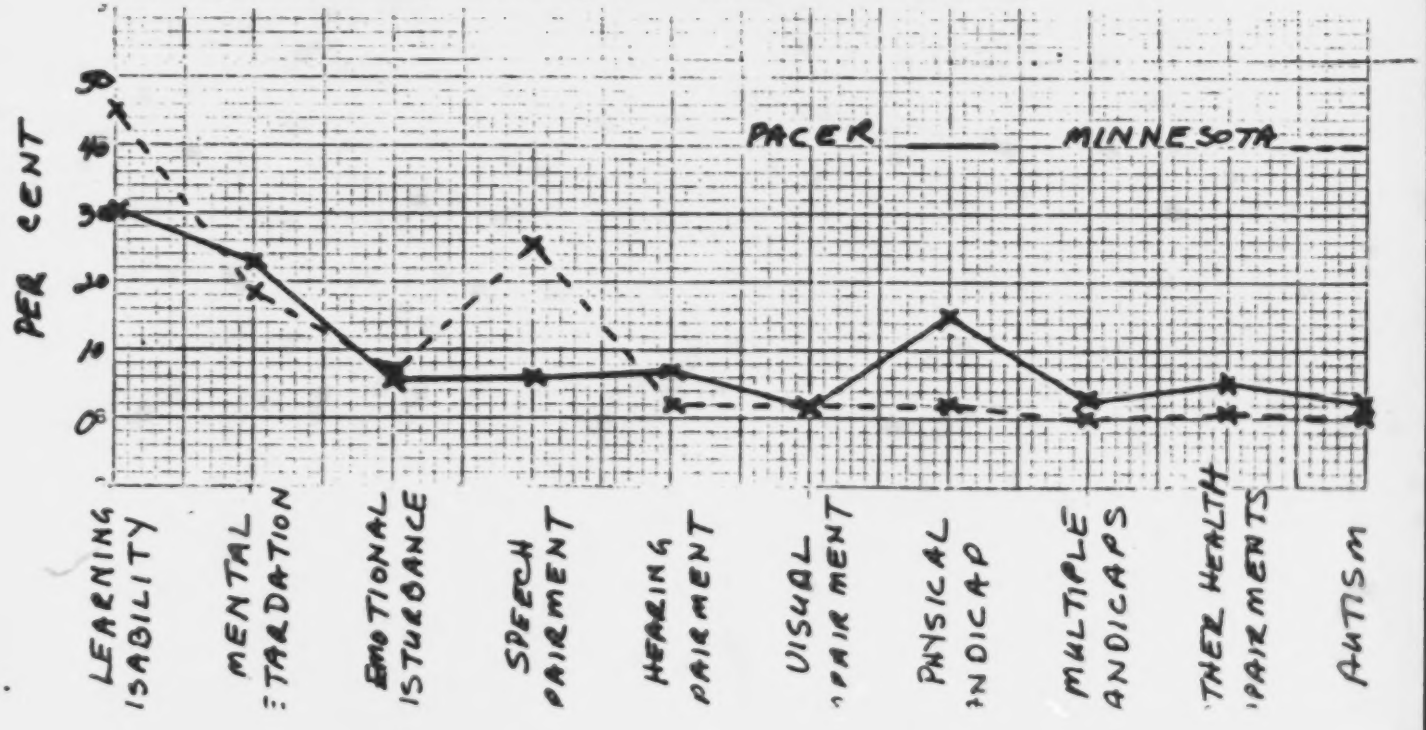


Relative to their numbers throughout the state, PACER has served since its inception a somewhat disproportionate number of parents with children ages 5 years. Part of the relative difference in the 0-3 age range between state and PACER figures is accounted for by the lack of mandated special education service for children ages 0-4, but probably also reflects a tendency for parents to seek information about special education soon after their child is identified as handicapped. The greatest percentage of PACER's clients for Levels II, III and V services had children aged 6-11, a distribution reflecting the state's age distribution; the actual percentage of PACER children 6-11 years of age fell below the percentage of handicapped children aged 6-11 within Minnesota. The distribution of children within specific age ranges of parents using PACER Level V services generally more closely reflected state demographic data than did the distribution of children of parents attending PACER's Levels II and III workshops. This difference between PACER service levels may reflect a tendency for parents of young children to seek general background information on special education and for parents of older children to seek answers to specific problems arising in their child's education.

Figure 3 graphically compares the number of parents of children served by PACER having specific disabilities and the number of children with those same disabilities receiving special education service within Minnesota. PACER data describe children of parents using PACER's Levels II, III and V services, and represent the combined percentage of parents having a child with a specific primary disability for the three service levels averaged over five years. Minnesota data were taken from 1980, 1981 and 1982 demographic tables.

FIGURE 3

The Percentage of Parents Using PACER's Levels II, III and V Services Over Five Years Having Children with A Specific Primary Disability, and the Percentage of All Handicapped Children Receiving Special Education Service within Minnesota with a Specific Primary Disability (PACER; ---- Minnesota.)

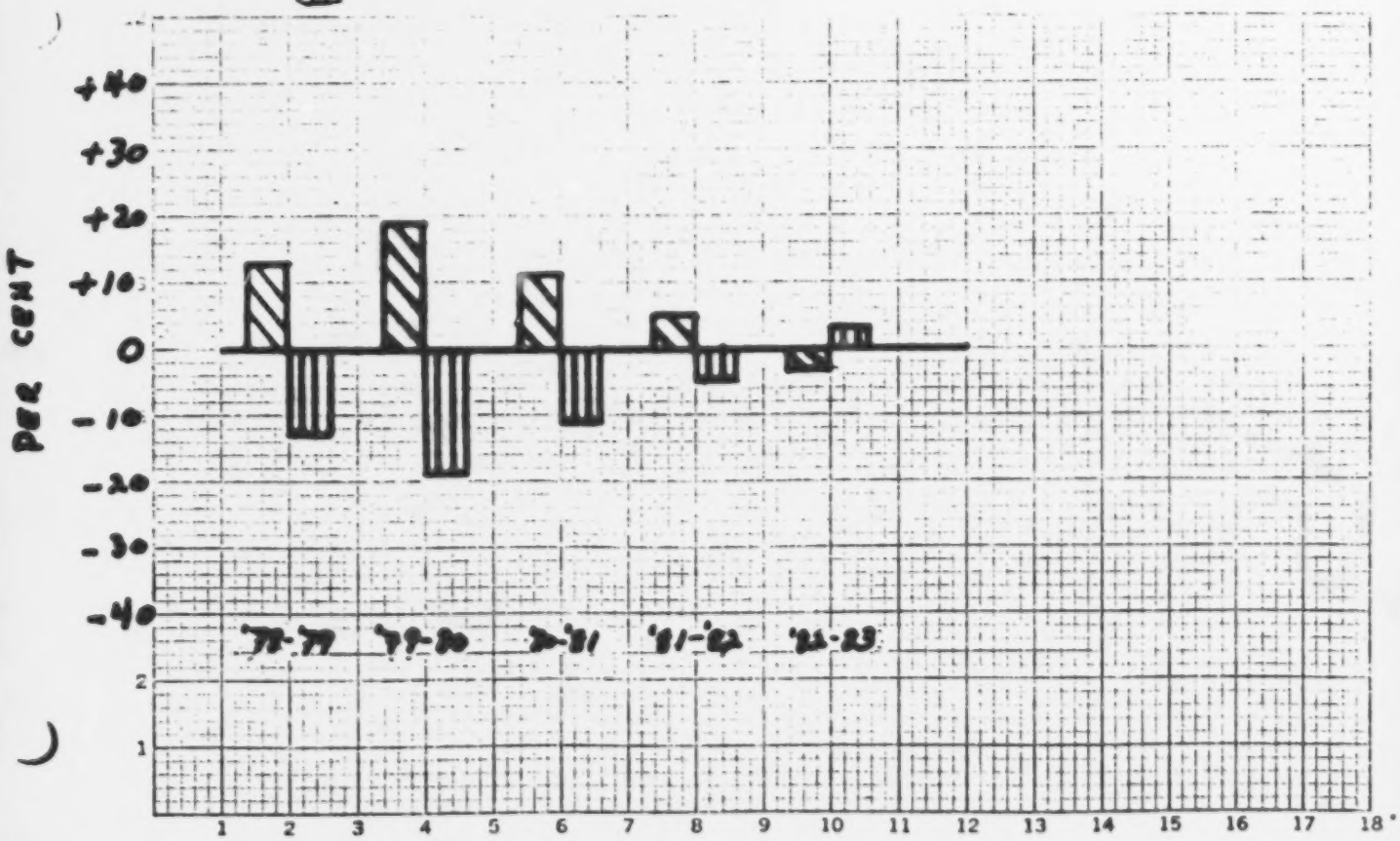


PACER appears to have served a disproportionately large percentage of paren with physically handicapped children and a disproportionately small percent e of parents with speech impaired or learning disabled children. Part of the discrepancy in percentages between state and PACER figures may be a functic.. of differential bases on which parents and educators identify a child's primary handicap: educators' definitions are learning related, while those of parents reflect other considerations. Also, learning disabilities and speech impairments may be less likely to be identified by parents as handicaps.

The graph in Figure 4 represents the difference in percentage of out-state and metropolitan parents attending PACER's Level II workshops from the percentage of children in out-state and metropolitan areas receiving special education service in Minnesota. The graph is based on 1984 Minnesota data in which 55% of the children receiving special education service lived in out-state areas. The percentage decrease in the number of Level II workshops given in out-state areas across years was accompanied by a decrease in the overall number of Level II workshops from 28 in 1978-1979 to 19 in 1982-1983.

FIGURE 4

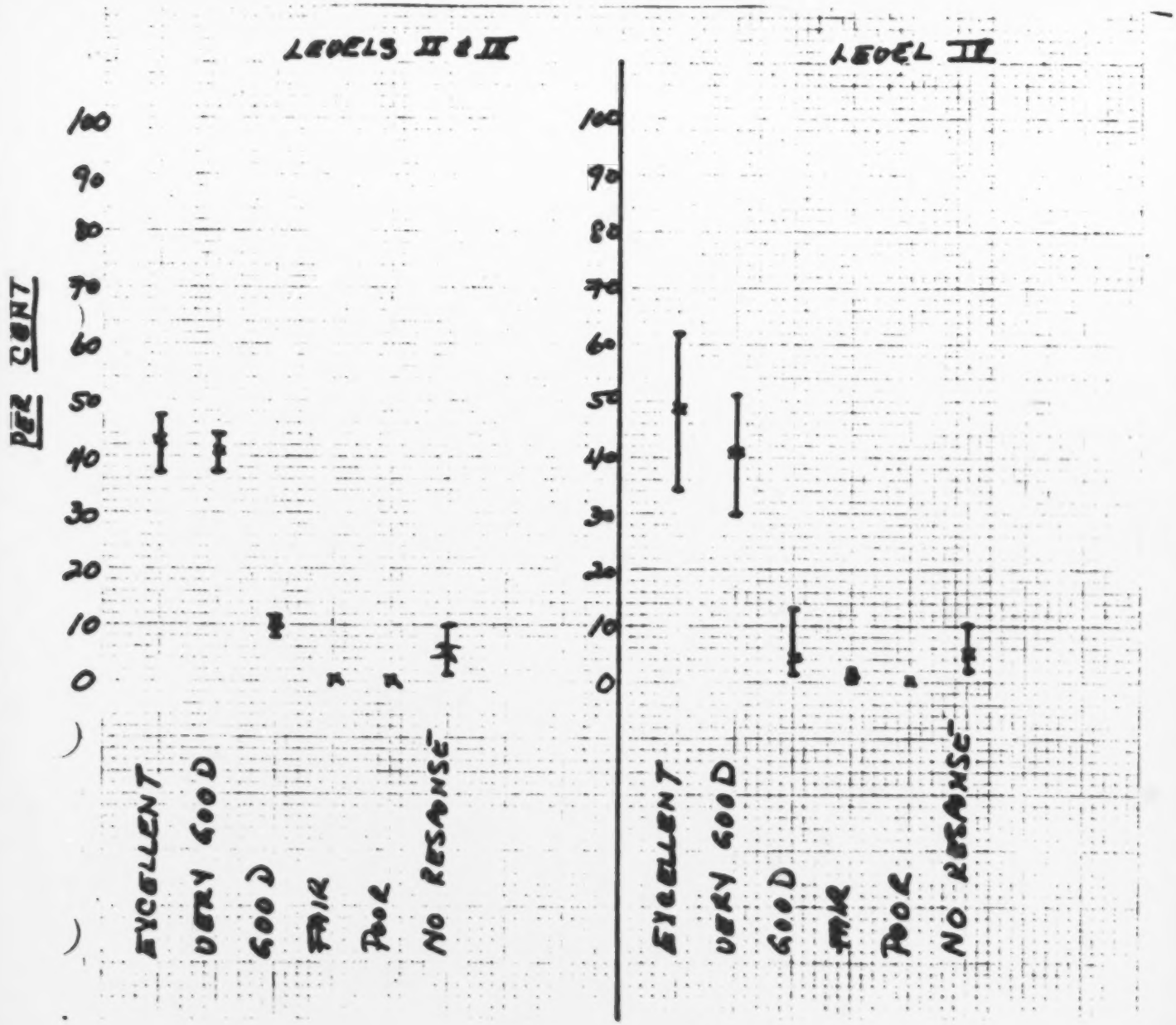
Percent Deviation of Level II Workshop Participants from 55% Out-state/45% Metropolitan Distribution of Special Education Students with Minnesota (= out-state; = metropolitan.)



The evaluation data graphed in Figure 5 were collected immediately subsequen o Levels II, III and IV workshops: data points represent averages of responses ver five years. PACER workshops were consistently rated very positively over th five years, with a greater variance of ratings appearing for Level IV traini g of trainers workshops.

FIGURE 5

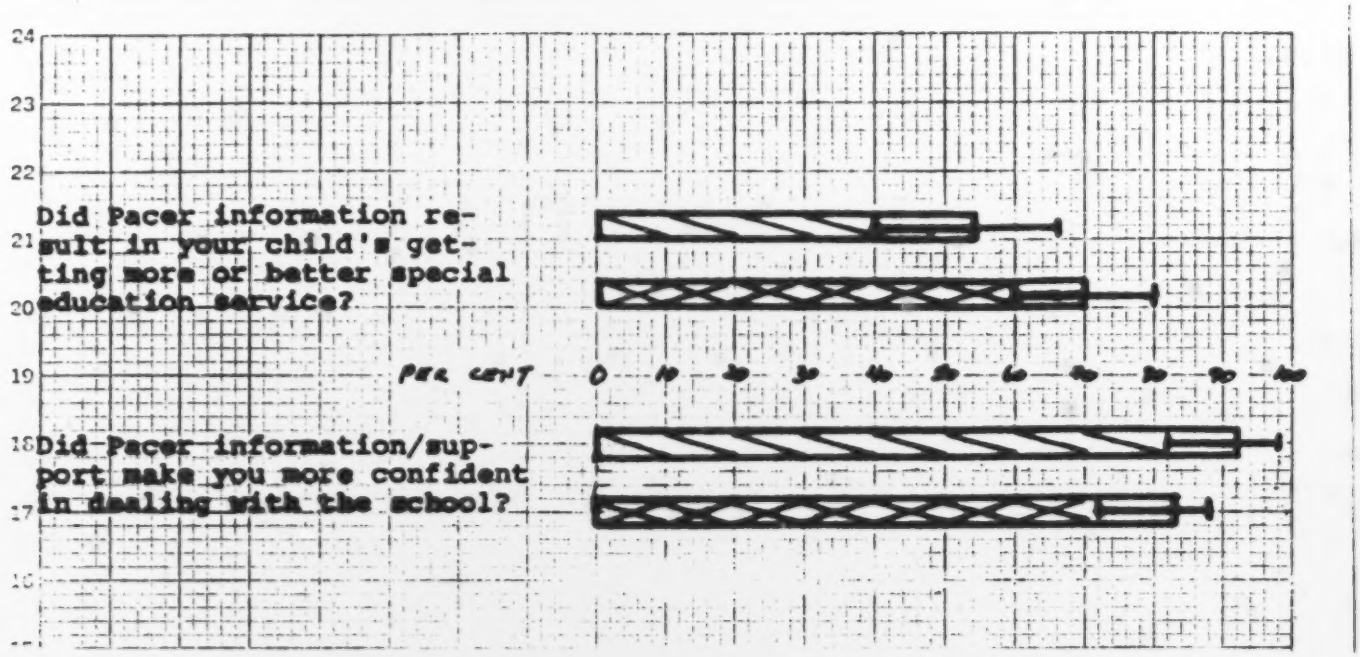
Mean Percent and Range of Evaluation Ratings of Levels II, III and IV Workshops.



Data graphed in Figure 6 were gathered in the end of the fiscal year follow-up phone surveys with persons who had used PACER's Levels II, III and V services. In follow-up data, receipt of comprehensive information on the special education laws through Levels II and III workshops made parents more confident in dealing with schools than receipt of individual training and assistance over the phone. In contradistinction, Level V service given in response to a specific problem resulted in more parents reporting increased or improved special education service than did general information given within a three hour workshops format.

FIGURE 6

Mean Percent and Range of Responses to Follow-up Evaluation Questions for Levels II, III and V Services (▨ = Level II/III; ▩ = Level V.)


Did Pacer information result in your child's getting more or better special education service?
PER CENT
0
Did Pacer information/support make you more confident in dealing with the school?

REFERENCES

Flynn, N. Delivery of Technical Assistance Activities Provided Under P.L. 94-142. (Resource Report #2). Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1980.

Henderson, A.T. Parent Participation/Student Involvement: The Evidence Grows. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1982.

Pyecha, J. N. et al. A National Survey of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for Handicapped Children. Research Triangle Park, N.C.: Center for Educational Reserach and Evaluation, 1980.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

- Comprehensive Epilepsy Program
- Courage Center
- Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota
- Friends of Hearing Handicapped Children
- Mental Health Advocates' Coalition of Minnesota
- Mental Health Association of Minnesota
- Metropolitan Association for the Hearing Impaired
- Minnesota Association for Children With Learning Disabilities
- Minnesota Association for Retarded Citizens
- Minnesota Committee for the Handicapped
- Minnesota Foundation for Better Hearing and Speech
- Minnesota Speech-Language and Hearing Association
- Minnesota State Council for the Handicapped
- Muscular Dystrophy Association of Minnesota
- National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota
- Spina Bifida Association of Minnesota
- Twin Cities Society for Children and Adults with Autism
- United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota

APPENDIX 1 - A

NAME_____DATE_____
(Please Print)

ADDRESS_____CITY_____STATE___ZIP_____
(Please Print)

PHONE NUMBER (HOME)_____ (WORK)_____

All information from this entire questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence. We are asking for your name only in order to contact you in the future for a follow-up interview. No names will be used when tabulating the results of our research.

ADMINISTERED AS INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE TO EXPERIMENTAL, CONTRAST AND MOTIVATION GROUPS

Directions: Please circle the number that corresponds best with how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

		Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1.	I know how to use my child's assessment results to decide what should be contained in her/his Individual Education Program (IEP).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I know how to use the goals and objectives on my child's IEP to monitor his/her progress during the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I would be comfortable asking enough questions in an IEP meeting to fully understand a point that was unclear to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I would be comfortable in an IEP meeting disagreeing with a goal for my child's program that had been proposed by the staff.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I would press for a change in my child's special education services even if doing so would damage a comfortable relationship with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am familiar enough with the special education laws to know if the school is violating any portion of them.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I know which procedures are provided in the special education laws to aid me in the solution of disagreements I might have with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	It is up to me to watch that the special education laws/regulations for my child are being obeyed, and to question the school if they are not.	1	2	3	4	5

		Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
9.	Before the special education laws/regulations existed, a parent could have justly sought involvement in decisions regarding her/his handicapped child's education.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I generally feel alone in dealing with situations surrounding my child's handicap(s).	1	2	3	4	5

Rosemount

Instructions: Please circle the number that corresponds to your response choice.

1. To provide continuity in a child's program as she/he gets older, special education laws require that teaching goals begun on one IEP (Individual Education Program) must be continued on the following IEP.

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3 I'm not sure

2. The purpose of the IEP meeting as defined by the special education laws is to provide an opportunity for the parent(s) to approve the IEP the school staff has prepared.

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. I'm not sure

3. Parents have 30 days within which to notify the school in writing of their approval or disapproval of their child's IEP.

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. I'm not sure

4. If parents of a child who has been receiving special education service fail to notify the school of their approval of the upcoming year's IEP, the school must continue to use the past year's IEP for which it has already received the parents' approval.

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3 I'm not sure

5. If a school refuses a parent's request to test his/her child, the parent can get outside testing done by qualified professionals and be guaranteed the school will pay for it.

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. I'm not sure

6. If parents disagree with the results of their child's school assessment, they can get an outside assessment done by qualified professionals but the school can refuse to consider these results at the IEP staffing.

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. I'm not sure

7. A full assessment by the school of a handicapped child...(Circle any that are correct.)

   1. is required by law every two years once a child is receiving special education services
   2. can never proceed without written parental approval
   3. must not include tests that discriminate against a child on the basis of his/her handicap
   4. can include medical information
   5. I'm not sure

8. In Minnesota, public school districts are required to provide a free appropriate education for handicapped children from age____to age____or to the completion of high school.

9. Under federal and state special education laws, the act of "filing a complaint" means that

   1. after having first discussed the issue with their child's teacher, parents write a letter to their school board if they disagree with a program for their child recommended by school staff
   2. parents write to their special education director if they disagree with the results of their child's formal evaluation (testing)
   3. after having first discussed their concern with school administrators, parents submit a written protest to the State Department of Education if they believe their school district is violating special educcation laws/ regulations
   4. I'm not sure

10. The school can decide whether a child should attend his/her IEP meeting.

    1. yes
    2. no
    3. I'm not sure

11. After a handicapped child is graduated from high school in Minnesota, the law(s) that will protect him/her from discrimination based on a handicap is/are

    1. Public Law 94-142
    2. Minnesota Statute 120.17
    3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
    4. None of the above
    5. I'm not sure

Rosemount

12. If you were to move from state to state with your handicapped child, which of the following would always be required by law? (Circle any that are correct.)

    1. the availability of a due process hearing
    2. written notification to parent(s) by the school of its intention to assess the child
    3. a conciliation conference to resolve differences between parent(s) and the school
    4. none of the above
    5. I'm not sure

13. Which of the following would be considered an appropriate hearing officer in a special education due process hearing? (Circle any that are correct.)

    1. your school's principal
    2. your school district's special education director
    3. your school board member
    4. none of the above
    5. I'm not sure

14. Which of the following is/are considered a <u>related</u> service within Minnesota's special education regulations? (Circle any that are correct.)

    1. occupational therapy
    2. adapative physical education
    3. speech therapy
    4. physical therapy
    5. I'm not sure

15. A handicapped child's right to free special education depends on the school district's having sufficient money to provide appropriate programs for that child.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE, PLEASE

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT CORRESPONDS TO YOUR RESPONSE CHOICE

1. Was your child(ren) receiving special education services last school year (1982-1983)?

(Child one)	(Child two)	(Child three)
1. yes	1. yes	1. yes
2. no	2. no	2. no

2. If yes, how satisfied were you with the special education services your child(ren) received last year?

	extremely satisfied	somewhat satisfied	satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	extremely dissatisfied
(child 1)	1	2	3	4	5
(child 2)	1	2	3	4	5
(child 3)	1	2	3	4	5

3. What type of program was your child attending last year?

1. preschool for special needs children
2. regular daycare/nursery
3. public elementary or secondary
4. private elementary or secondary
5. residential school or treatment center
6. sheltered workshop
7. developmental achievement center (DAC)
8. other (please specify)_____

Please complete the remaining questions if your child(ren) received special education services last year. Base your answers to the best of your recollection on your experiences during only the last school year, 1982-83.

4. How many meetings to prepare or review the IEP (Individual Education Program) did you attend?_____

5. How many IEP meetings were you invited to attend by school staff?_____

6. Did you have a list of points you wanted to discuss that you brought with you to the IEP meeting?

1. yes
2. no

Rosemount

7. Did you suggest that any specific additions or changes be made in the IEP?

   1. yes
   2. no
   3. none were needed to be made

8. During the IEP meetings, did you ask that anything be explained more fully?

   1. yes
   2. no
   3. nothing needed further explanation
   4. I don't remember

9. Did you bring the IEP home to examine it before deciding whether or not to approve it?

(child one)	(child two)	(child three)
1. yes	1. yes	1. yes
2. no	2. no	2. no

10. Were you dissatisfied with the content of the IEP you were asked to approve?

    1. yes
    2. no

11. If yes, did you withhold approval of the IEP?

    1. yes
    2. no

12. Did you keep records on any of the following?

    1. your child's progress in school
    2. your child's progress at home
    3. test results
    4. conversations with the school about your child

13. Was an assessment done of your child(ren)?

    1. yes
    2. no

14. If YES, did you provide information that was included in the assessment?

    1. yes
    2. no

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15. If an assessment was done of your child did you meet with school staff before the IEP meeting for an explanation of the test results?

    1. yes
    2. no

16. Did you think the test results accurately showed your child's strengths and weaknesses?

    1. yes
    2. no

17. If NO, did you request additional testing?

    1. yes
    2. no

18. Were you uncomfortable with an assessment the school staff wanted to do?

    1. yes
    2. no
    3. my child(ren) was not assessed

19. If yes, did you withhold your permission for it to be done?

    1. yes
    2. no

20. Did you initiate a request that an assessment of your child be done?

    1. yes
    2. no

21. Did you have an outside assessment of your child done?

    1. yes
    2. no

22. Did you have any serious concerns about your child(ren)'s progress during the year?

    1. yes
    2. no

23. If YES, did you talk about them with anyone at school?

    1. yes
    2. no

24. Were you involved in any of the following?

    1. conciliation conference
    2. due process hearing
    3. complaint procedure
    4. none of the above

25. Did you provide information to any other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities?

    1. yes
    2. no

26. Did you accompany parents of other handicapped children to a school conference or to their child's IEP meeting?

    1. yes
    2. no

THANK YOU.

Rosemount

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT CORRESPONDS TO YOUR RESPONSE CHOICE

2. Have you attended any workshops/seminars/conferences the topic of which was special education laws, and the special education rights and responsibilities of parents of handicapped children?

   1. yes
   2. no

   If YES, the workshop/seminar/conference was given By_____

   At (City/Town)_____

   The date I attended was approximately_____ _____
   Month Year

3. Are there any other sources besides workshops/seminars/conferences from which you've gained information on educational rights of handicapped children?

   1. school personnel
   2. parents of other handicapped children
   3. PACER newsletter
   4. newsletter from another parent organization or disability group
   5. literature on special education laws from PACER Center
   6. literature on special education rights from another parent organization or disability group
   7. phone contact with PACER Center
   8. phone contact with another parent organization or disability group
   9. other_____

4. Are you trained/employed in special education or in other areas serving the needs of handicapped children?

   1. yes (please specify)_____
   2. no

5. Are you currently a participant in any formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children?

   1. yes
   2. no

   If YES, which group(s)?_____

   6. If NO, is there any group for parents of handicapped children in your area?

      1. yes
      2. no
      3. I don't know

7. What is your age please?_____

8. Is yours a single parent household?

1. yes
2. no

9. In your household, what does the female/mother currently do? (Circle all that apply.)

1	2	3	4
full time work as homemaker	full time work outside home	part time work outside home	paid work inside the home

In your household, what does the male/father currently do? (Circle all that apply.)

1	2	3	4
full time work as homemaker	full time work outside home	part time work outside home	paid work inside home

10. Please circle the last type of school attended

female/mother:

1	2	3	4	5
Grade School	High School	Trade School	College	Graduate School

male/father:

1	2	3	4	5
Grade School	High School	Trade School	College	Graduate School

11. How many children do you have?_____

12. How many of your children have handicaps?_____

13. Where is your handicapped child(ren) living this year?

1. My home
2. Foster home
3. Group home
4. Other (Please specify)_____

14. What is the age of your handicapped child(ren)?_____

15. What is the sex of your handicapped child(ren)?_____

16. Please check your child(ren)'s handicap(s) and underline his/her primary disability. (If you have more than one handicapped child, please number the handicaps so the children can be distinguished.)

____visually impaired

____hearing impaired

____speech impaired

____cerebral palsy/other physical handicaps

____epilepsy/diabetes/other health related disorders

____mental retardation

____behavior problem

____emotional disturbance

____combined behavior problem/emotional disturbance

____learning disability

____autism

____other (specify)_____

17. How long ago was your child(ren's) primary handicap identified?_____

18. Does your handicapped child(ren) have any medical problems that are currently causing great difficulty in day-to-day functioning?

1. yes (please describe)_____
2. no

19. In what kind of program is your child(ren) currently enrolled?

1. preschool for special needs children
2. regular daycare/nursery
3. public elementary or secondary
4. private elementary or secondary
5. residential school or treatment center
6. sheltered workshop
7. developmental achievement center (DAC)
8. other (please specify)_____

20. If your child(ren) is currently in school, how long has he/she been receiving special education services?_____

21. Did you ever request that your child(ren) receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?

1. yes (what service?)_____
2. no

Rosemount

22. If your child(ren) is currently receiving special education service in school, how satisfied are you with the education being given?

	extremely satisfied	somewhat satisfied	satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	extremely dissatisfied
(child 1)	1	2	3	4	5
(child 2)	1	2	3	4	5
(child 3)	1	2	3	4	5

23. Please check which level of service your child(ren) is currently receiving:

____ My child is currently attending a preschool or DAC program.

____Level 1: My child is in a regular education classroom with no special education services but is monitored (observed) for any difficulties she/he may be having.

____Level 2: My child is in a regular education classroom; the special education teacher gives assistance to the classroom teacher but does not work directly with my child.

____Level 3: My child is in a regular education classroom 50% or more of the day but a special education teacher works directly with him/her some of the time.

____Level 4: My child is in special education classes 50% or more of the day but spends some time with nonhandicapped children in regular education classes.

____Level 5: My child spends all her/his time in a special education class or special education school.

____Level 6: My child is in a special education program at a residential facility for handicapped children.

____ I am not sure what level of service is currently being given to my child.

24. On the average, how many times per month do you talk with other parents of handicapped children about any issues concerning your handicapped children?

0 1 2 4 8 12 more than 12

THANK YOU.

Rosemount

25. What is your opinion about the amount of material presented by the speakers in this workshop?

    1. there was much too much material covered
    2. there was a little too much material covered
    3. the right amount of material was covered
    4. a little more material could have been covered
    5. too little material was covered
    6. much more material could have been covered

26. How much of the material presented by the speakers did you already know?

    1. most
    2. about half
    3. hardly any at all

27. What did you like best (mark with 1) and what did you like least (mark with 0) in the workshop?

    ____1. the presentations by the speakers
    ____2. the small group discussions
    ____3. the role playing
    ____4. meeting other parents

28. What needs do you have concerning your handicapped child that have not been addressed by this workshop?

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU.

Robbinsdale

(FOR EXPERIMENTAL PARENTS ONLY)

As for any kind of service, people may or may not have a need or desire to use the informational services PACER provides. In addition, people might wish to use PACER's services but not like the manner in which they are provided. We are fortunate to be able to get your feedback on these matters, and we would be very grateful if you would try to answer the following as accurately as possible.

Did you know ahead of the scheduled time that PACER was going to be giving a workshop in Rosemount on February 13, 1984.

___yes
___no

If yes, did you learn of it from a

___friend?
___newspaper ad?
___school personnel?
___other_____

If you knew of the workshop and chose not to attend, or if you would not have attended even if you had known about the workshop, could you please try to specify why? (Check all that apply.)

___In the past, I have generally not found workshops particularly useful.

___I am informed about my child's educational rights and would not expect to learn much new information at a workshop.

___It was not clear enough to me what was going to be covered in the workshop.

___I trust the school personnel and believe they are doing what is required by law for my child.

___Educational laws are for the school and do not involve me.

___The term educational rights sounds militant, and I do not believe an aggressive approach with the school is helpful.

___Scheduling time to attend a workshop is very difficult.

___Arranging transportation to attend a workshop is very difficult.

___Expenses of attending a workshop (gas, babysitting) make it difficult to go.

___Arranging for child care is difficult.

___The responsibilities of a family, a special needs child, and/or a job leave little time or energy for extra activities.

___My child's education program is not covered by laws for the education of the handicapped.

___Other (please specify)_____

Rosemount

(FOR CONTRAST PARENTS ONLY)

APPENDIX 1-B

NAME_____ DATE_____
(Please Print)

ADDRESS_____ CITY_____ STATE___ ZIP_____
(Please Print)

PHONE NUMBER (HOME)_____ (WORK)_____

Please complete this questionnaire whether or not your child(ren) has/have been receiving special education service during the current school year. All information from this questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence. Your name will be removed before recording the data.

Return to: PACER Center, Inc.
4701 Chicago Ave. So.
Mpls., MN 55407

Return by: May 14, 1984

ADMINISTERED AS MAY QUESTIONNAIRE TO EXPERIMENTAL, CONTRAST, MOTIVATION AND MATERIALS GROUPS

Directions: Please circle the number that corresponds best with how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

		Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1.	I know how to use my child's assessment results to decide what should be contained in her/his Individual Education Program (IEP).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I know how to use the goals and objectives on my child's IEP to monitor his/her progress during the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I would be comfortable asking enough questions in an IEP meeting to fully understand a point that was unclear to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I would be comfortable in an IEP meeting disagreeing with a goal for my child's program that had been proposed by the staff.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I would press for a change in my child's special education services even if doing so would damage a comfortable relationship with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am familiar enough with the special education laws to know if the school is violating any portion of them.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I know which procedures are provided in the special education laws to aid me in the solution of disagreements I might have with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	It is up to me to watch that the special education laws/regulations for my child are being obeyed, and to question the school if they are not.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Before the special education laws/ regulations existed, a parent could have justly sought involvement in decisions regarding her/his handicapped child's education.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I generally feel alone in dealing with situations surrounding my child's handicap(s).	1	2	3	4	5

choice.

---

11. To provide continuity in a child's program as she/he gets older, special education laws require that teaching goals begun on one IEP (Individual Education Program) must be continued on the following IEP.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3 I'm not sure

12. The purpose of the IEP meeting as defined by the special education laws is to provide an opportunity for the parent(s) to approve the IEP the school staff has prepared.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

13. Parents have 30 days within which to notify the school in writing of their approval or disapproval of their child's IEP.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

14. If parents of a child who has been receiving special education service fail to notify the school of their approval of the upcoming year's IEP, the school must continue to use the past year's IEP for which it has already received the parents' approval.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3 I'm not sure

15. If a school refuses a parent's request to test his/her child, the parent can get outside testing done by qualified professionals and be guaranteed the school will pay for it.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

16. If parents disagree with the results of their child's school assessment, they can get an outside assessment done by qualified professionals but the school can refuse to consider these results at the IEP staffing.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

17. A full assessment by the school of a handicapped child...(Circle any that are correct.)

    1. is required by law every two years once a child is receiving special education services
    2. can never proceed without written parental approval
    3. must not include tests that discriminate against a child on the basis of his/her handicap
    4. can include medical information
    5. I'm not sure

18. In Minnesota, public school districts are required to provide a free appropriate education for handicapped children from age (a) to age (b) or to the completion of high school. (Circle your choice for (a) and for (b))

(a)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	not sure
(b)	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	not sure

19. Under federal and state special education laws, the act of "filing a complaint" means that

1. after having first discussed the issue with their child's teacher, parents write a letter to their school board if they disagree with a program for their child recommended by school staff
2. parents write to their special education director if they disagree with the results of their child's formal evaluation (testing)
3. after having first discussed their concern with school administrators, parents submit a written protest to the State Department of Education if they believe their school district is violating special education laws/ regulations
4. I'm not sure

20. The school can decide whether a child should attend his/her IEP meeting.

1. yes
2. no
3. I'm not sure

21. After a handicapped child is graduated from high school in Minnesota, the law(s) that will protect him/her from discrimination based on a handicap is/are

1. Public Law 94-142
2. Minnesota Statute 120.17
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
4. None of the above
5. I'm not sure

22. If you were to move from state to state with your handicapped child, which of the following would always be required by law? (Circle any that are correct.)

1. the availability of a due process hearing
2. written notification to parent(s) by the school of its intention to assess the child
3. a conciliation conference to resolve differences between parent(s) and the school
4. none of the above
5. I'm not sure

23. Which of the following would be considered an appropriate hearing officer in a special education due process hearing? (Circle any that are correct.)

1. your school's principal
2. your school district's special education director
3. your school board member
4. none of the above
5. I'm not sure

24. Which of the following is/are considered a related service within Minnesota's special education regulations? (Circle any that are correct.)

1. occupational therapy
2. adapative physical education
3. speech therapy
4. physical therapy
5. I'm not sure

25. A handicapped child's right to free special education depends on the school district's having sufficient money to provide appropriate programs for that child.

1. Yes
2. No
3. I'm not sure

UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE, WHEN COMPLETING THIS SECTION (QUESTIONS 26-51) BASE YOUR ANSWERS ON YOUR EXPERIENCES DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR (FALL, 1983 TO SPRING, 1984).

Directions: Please circle the number corresponding to your answer(s). If you have one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "First Child." If you have more than one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "Second Child," "Third Child," etc.

26. Has your child received special education service during the current school year (fall, 1983 to spring, 1984)?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

If none of your children has received special education during the current school year, skip questions 27 through 29. Go ahead to question 30.

---

27. For how many months during the current school year has your child received special education service?

	Months	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	0-3	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	4-6	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	7-10	3	3	3	3	3

28. How satisfied were you with the special education service your child received during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) extremely satisfied	1	1	1	1	1
(2) somewhat satisfied	2	2	2	2	2
(3) satisfied	3	3	3	3	3
(4) somewhat dissatisfied	4	4	4	4	4
(5) extremely dissatisfied	5	5	5	5	5

29. In what setting was your child receiving special service during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) preschool for special needs children	1	1	1	1	1
(2) regular daycare/preschool	2	2	2	2	2
(3) elementary or secondary - public	3	3	3	3	3
(4) elementary or secondary - private	4	4	4	4	4
(5) residential school or treatment center	5	5	5	5	5
(6) sheltered workshop	6	6	6	6	6
(7) developmental achievement center (DAC)	7	7	7	7	7

30. For all of your children, how many meetings to prepare or review the IEP (Individual Education Program) did you attend during the current school year?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

31. How many IEP meetings were you invited to attend by school staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

If you did not attend any IEP (Individual Education Program) meetings during the current school year, skip questions 32 through 37. Go ahead to question 38.

32. Did you suggest that any specific additions or changes be made in the IEP?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) none were needed	3	3	3	3	3

33. During the IEP meetings, did you ask that anything be explained more fully?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) nothing needed further explanation	3	3	3	3	3
(4) I don't remember	4	4	4	4	4

34. Did you bring the IEP home to examine it before deciding whether or not to approve it?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

35. Were you dissatisfied with the content of the IEP you were asked to approve?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

36. If "yes" to question 35, did you withhold approval of the IEP?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

37. If the school staff did an assessment of your child during the current school year, did you meet with them before the IEP meeting for an explanation of the test results?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

38. Did you keep records on any of the following:

(1) your child's progress in school
(2) your child's progress at home
(3) test results
(4) conversations with the school about your child

39. If the school staff did an assessment of your child during the current school year, did you think the test results accurately showed your child's strengths and weaknesses?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

40. If "no" to question 39, did you request additional testing?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

41. If your child was assessed during the current school year, did you provide information that was included in the assessment?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

42. Did you withhold permission for your school staff to do an assessment during the current school year?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	assessment not suggested	3	3	3	3	3

43. Did you initiate a request that an assessment of your child be done by the school staff during the current school year?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

44. Did you have an outside assessment of your child done during the current school year?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

45. Did you have any serious concerns about your child's progress during the current school year?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

46. If "yes" to question 45 did you talk about them with anyone at school?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

47. During the current school year were you involved in any of the following?

(1) conciliation conference
(2) due process hearing
(3) complaint procedure
(4) none of the above

48. During the current school year, did you request that your child receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

49. During the current school year, did you provide information to any other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities?

(1) yes
(2) no

50. During the current school year, did you accompany any parents of handicapped children to a school conference or to their children's IEP meetings?

(1) yes
(2) no

51. On the average, how many times per month did you talk with parents of handicapped children about <u>any</u> issues concerning your handicapped child?

0 1 2 4 8 12 More than 12

Directions: Please complete the next section whether or not your child has been receiving special education service during the current school year. Circle the number(s) that correspond(s) to your answer(s).

---

52. How many children do you have?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Over 10

53. How many of your children have handicaps?

1 2 3 4 5 Over 5

54. Where is your handicapped child currently living?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) my home	1	1	1	1	1
(2) foster home	2	2	2	2	2
(3) group home	3	3	3	3	3
(4) residential treatment center	4	4	4	4	4
(5) other (specify)_____	5	5	5	5	5

55. Please circle the level of service your child is currently receiving. (Explanations of service appear below the question.)

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	level 1	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	level 2	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	level 3	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	level 4	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	level 5	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	level 6	6	6	6	6	6
(7)	special preschool or DAC	7	7	7	7	7
(8)	my child is not receiving special education	8	8	8	8	8
(9)	I'm not sure	9	9	9	9	9

Level 1 = My child is in a regular education classroom with no special education services but is monitored (observed) for any difficulties she/he may be having.

Level 2 = My child is in a regular education classroom; the special education teacher gives assistance to the classroom teacher but does not work directly with my child.

Level 3 = My child is in a regular education classroom 50% or more of the day but a special education teacher works directly with him/her some of the time.

Level 4 = My child is in special education classes 50% or more of the day but spends some time with nonhandicapped children in regular education classes.

Level 5 = My child spends all her/his time in a special education class or special education school.

Level 6 = My child is in a special education program at a residential facility for handicapped children.

7 = My child is attending a preschool for special needs children or a DAC program.

56. What is the age of your handicapped child?

	years	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	0-3	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	4-6	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	7-10	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	11-15	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	16-20	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	Over 20	6	6	6	6	6

57. During the current school year, have you attended any workshops/seminars/conferences on special education laws or the special education rights and responsibilities of parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes, a PACER workshop(s) (how many_____?)

(2) yes, a workshop other than one given by PACER

(name of sponsoring group(s)_____)

(3) no

58. During the current school year, were there any sources besides workshops/seminars/conferences from which you've gained information on the educational rights of handicapped children?

(1) school personnel
(2) parents of other handicapped children
(3) PACER newsletter
(4) newsletter from another parent organization or disability group
(5) literature on special education laws from PACER Center
(6) literature on special education rights from another parent organization or disability group
(7) phone contact with PACER Center
(8) phone contact with another parent organization or disability group
(9) other_____

59. Are you currently a participant in any formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes
(2) no

if yes, which group(s)?_____

approximate date(s) you joined_____

60. If "no" to question 59, is there any group for parents of handicapped children in your area?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I don't know

61. If you have received a folder of written materials from PACER, have you referred to any of the information contained in it? (Circle any that apply.)

(1) I did not receive a folder of written materials from PACER
(2) I did receive written materials from PACER, but I did not have a need to refer to them
(3) yes, I referred to them to address a specific conern about my child's special education
(4) yes, I referred to them to provide information about special education laws to another parent or to a professional
(5) yes, I referred to them to find PACER's phone number
(6) yes, I referred to them for other reasons (specify)_____
(7) yes, I referred to them but the materials did not contain the information I needed (specify)

62. The following are topics discussed by the speakers at the PACER workshop you attended. Circle any topic on which you have needed more information to deal with your handicapped child's education than you were given at the workshop.

(1) history of the special education laws

(2) rights guaranteed by special education laws

(3) assessment

(4) IEP (Individual Education Program)

(5) conciliation conferences; due process hearings; complaint procedures

(6) techniques for communicating with school staff

63. What information, other than that provided at the PACER workshop, do you think it is important for parents to know to help them get their handicapped child a good education?

_____

_____

_____

64. As a result of the information presented at the PACER workshop, did you decide there were issues about your handicapped child's education that needed to be discussed with school staff?

(1) no, there were no issues about my child's program that needed to be discussed with school staff

(2) no, I was already aware before attending the workshop of issues needing to be discussed with school staff

(3) yes, at the workshop I became aware of issues that needed to be discussed with school staff

(THIS PAGE FOR EXPERIMENTAL PARENTS ONLY)

65. Did you contact PACER or any other parent organization for information regarding your child's special education program during the current school year?

(1) yes, I contacted PACER and received written information on the special education laws
(2) yes, I contacted PACER once and received specific answers to my questions over the phone
(3) yes, I contacted PACER several times by phone and discussed at length concerns about my child's education
(4) yes, I contacted another parent organization regarding my child's special education program (please specify organization)_____
(5) no

66. If you need to dial one (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, would you be more likely to contact PACER by phone if PACER had a toll free number rather than its current system of accepting collect calls from parents?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I do not need to dial one (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area

(CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE)

67. Please rate each of the following according to its importance in meeting your current needs.

	Very important	Moderately important	Important	Slightly important	Not important	I am not familiar with this topic
(1) regular meetings with parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) information about your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) information on available preschool programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) information on the differences in systems between preschool and elementary school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) information on available elementary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) information on available secondary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) in-depth information on planning and writing an IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6
(8) in-depth information on assessment procedures and instruments used in schools	1	2	3	4	5	6
(9) in-depth information on conciliation conferences, due process hearings, and complaint procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6
(10) information on community resources: medical personnel skilled in dealing with handicapped children, in-home child care, out of home child care, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(11) family training: methods of teaching, modifying behavior, managing physical disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
(12) information on the nature and use of drugs in the management of some disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(13) information on the special vulnerability of handicapped persons to sexual abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
(14) advocacy training in seeking services for your child	1	2	3	4	5	6
(15) training in effective communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
(16) information on stress in families with a handicapped child and methods for dealing with it	1	2	3	4	5	6
(17) aid with the shock, anger, denial, acceptance surrounding your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(18) information on early planning for your child's years after his/her completion of school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(19) information on the preparation of a will providing care for your handicapped child in case of your death	1	2	3	4	5	6
(20) information on the use of computers in special education	1	2	3	4	5	6
(21) information on the impact of minimum competency testing on special education students	1	2	3	4	5	6
(22) information comparing the benefits of teaching academic skills versus independent living and vocational skills in school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(23) research results on the educational effectiveness of various teaching techniques and classroom environments	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(24) information on how parents can promote effective service for handicapped students in the least restrictive educational setting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(25) information on how parents can encourage the creation of a greater number and variety of work settings, living arrangements, and continuing education options for handicapped young adults after they have completed their school years	1	2	3	4	5	6
(26) opportunities for school staff to learn more about the nature of your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(27) opportunities for school staff to learn more about the emotional needs of parents having a handicapped child	1	2	3	4	5	6
(28) information for school staff on methods of increasing professional openness to involvement by parents in education	1	2	3	4	5	6
(29) increased sensitivity of nonhandicapped students to the feelings and needs of handicapped students	1	2	3	4	5	6

61. If you have received a folder of written materials from PACER, have you referred to any of the information contained in it? (Circle any that apply.)

(1) I did not receive a folder of written materials from PACER
(2) I did receive written materials from PACER, but I did not have a need to refer to them
(3) yes, I referred to them to address a specific conern about my child's special education
(4) yes, I referred to them to provide information about special education laws to another parent or to a professional
(5) yes, I referred to them to find PACER's phone number
(6) yes, I referred to them for other reasons (specify)_____
(7) yes, I referred to them but the materials did not contain the information I needed

62. As a result of filling out the PACER questionnaire several months ago, did you decide there were issues about your handicapped child's education that needed to be discussed with the school staff?

(1) no, because there were no issues about my child's program that needed to be discussed with school staff
(2) no, I was already aware before filling out the questionnaire of issues that needed to be discussed with school staff
(3) yes, in filling out the questionnaire, I became aware of issues that needed to be discussed with the school staff

63. As a result of filling out the PACER questionnaire several months ago, did you decide that you needed more information to deal with your handicapped child's education?

(1) no, I did not feel a need for more information
(2) no, I was already aware that I needed more information before filling out the questionnaire
(3) yes, by filling out the questionnaire I became aware that I needed more information to deal with my handicapped child's education

64. Did you contact PACER or any other parent organization for information regarding your child's special education program during the current school year? (Circle any that apply.)

(1) yes, I contacted PACER and received written information on the special education laws
(2) yes, I contacted PACER once and received specific answers to my questions over the phone
(3) yes, I contacted PACER several times by phone and discussed at length concerns about my child's education
(4) yes, I contacted another parent organization regarding my child's special education program (specify organization)_____
(5) no

65. If you need to dial one (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, would you be more likely to contact PACER by phone if PACER had a toll free number rather than its current system of accepting collect calls from parents?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I do not need to dial one (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area

(THIS PAGE FOR CONTRAST, MOTIVATION & MATERIALS GROUPS)

APPENDIX 1-C

NAME_____DATE_____
(Please Print)

ADDRESS_____CITY_____STATE___ZIP_____
(Please Print)

PHONE NUMBER (HOME)_____ (WORK)_____

Please complete this questionnaire whether or not your child(ren) has/have been receiving special education service during the current school year. All information from this questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence. Your name will be removed before recording the data.

Return to: PACER Center, Inc.
4701 Chicago Ave. So.
Mpls., MN 55407

Return by: May 21, 1984

ADMINISTERED IN MAY
TO LONGITUDINAL GROUP

Directions: Please circle the number that corresponds best with how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

		Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1.	I know how to use my child's assessment results to decide what should be contained in her/his Individual Education Program (IEP).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I know how to use the goals and objectives on my child's IEP to monitor his/her progress during the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I would be comfortable asking enough questions in an IEP meeting to fully understand a point that was unclear to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I would be comfortable in an IEP meeting disagreeing with a goal for my child's program that had been proposed by the staff.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I would press for a change in my child's special education services even if doing so would damage a comfortable relationship with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am familiar enough with the special education laws to know if the school is violating any portion of them.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I know which procedures are provided in the special education laws to aid me in the solution of disagreements I might have with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	It is up to me to watch that the special education laws/regulations for my child are being obeyed, and to question the school if they are not.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Before the special education laws/ regulations existed, a parent could have justly sought involvement in decisions regarding her/his handicapped child's education.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I generally feel alone in dealing with situations surrounding my child's handicap(s).	1	2	3	4	5

Instructions: Please circle the number that corresponds to your response choice.

---

11. To provide continuity in a child's program as she/he gets older, special education laws require that teaching goals begun on one IEP (Individual Education Program) must be continued on the following IEP.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3 I'm not sure

12. The purpose of the IEP meeting as defined by the special education laws is to provide an opportunity for the parent(s) to approve the IEP the school staff has prepared.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

13. Parents have 30 days within which to notify the school in writing of their approval or disapproval of their child's IEP.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

14. If parents of a child who has been receiving special education service fail to notify the school of their approval of the upcoming year's IEP, the school must continue to use the past year's IEP for which it has already received the parents' approval.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3 I'm not sure

15. If a school refuses a parent's request to test his/her child, the parent can get outside testing done by qualified professionals and be guaranteed the school will pay for it.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

16. If parents disagree with the results of their child's school assessment, they can get an outside assessment done by qualified professionals but the school can refuse to consider these results at the IEP staffing.

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. I'm not sure

17. A full assessment by the school of a handicapped child...(Circle any that are correct.)

    1. is required by law every two years once a child is receiving special education services
    2. can never proceed without written parental approval
    3. must not include tests that discriminate against a child on the basis of his/her handicap
    4. can include medical information
    5. I'm not sure

18. In Minnesota, public school districts are required to provide a free appropriate education for handicapped children from age (a) to age (b) or to the completion of high school. (Circle your choice for (a) and for (b))

(a)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	not sure
(b)	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	not sure

19. Under federal and state special education laws, the act of "filing a complaint" means that

1. after having first discussed the issue with their child's teacher, parents write a letter to their school board if they disagree with a program for their child recommended by school staff
2. parents write to their special education director if they disagree with the results of their child's formal evaluation (testing)
3. after having first discussed their concern with school administrators, parents submit a written protest to the State Department of Education if they believe their school district is violating special education laws/ regulations
4. I'm not sure

20. The school can decide whether a child should attend his/her IEP meeting.

1. yes
2. no
3. I'm not sure

21. After a handicapped child is graduated from high school in Minnesota, the law(s) that will protect him/her from discrimination based on a handicap is/are

1. Public Law 94-142
2. Minnesota Statute 120.17
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
4. None of the above
5. I'm not sure

22. If you were to move from state to state with your handicapped child, which of the following would always be required by law? (Circle any that are correct.)

1. the availability of a due process hearing
2. written notification to parent(s) by the school of its intention to assess the child
3. a conciliation conference to resolve differences between parent(s) and the school
4. none of the above
5. I'm not sure

23. Which of the following would be considered an appropriate hearing officer in a special education due process hearing? (Circle any that are correct.)

1. your school's principal
2. your school district's special education director
3. your school board member
4. none of the above
5. I'm not sure

24. Which of the following is/are considered a <u>related</u> service within Minnesota's special education regulations? (Circle any that are correct.)

1. occupational therapy
2. adapative physical education
3. speech therapy
4. physical therapy
5. I'm not sure

25. A handicapped child's right to free special education depends on the school district's having sufficient money to provide appropriate programs for that child.

1. Yes
2. No
3. I'm not sure

UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE, WHEN COMPLETING THIS SECTION (QUESTIONS 26-51) BASE YOUR ANSWERS ON YOUR EXPERIENCES DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR (FALL, 1983 TO SPRING, 1984).

Directions: Please circle the number corresponding to your answer(s). If you have one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "First Child." If you have more than one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "Second Child," "Third Child," etc.

26. Has your child received special education service during the current school year (fall, 1983 to spring, 1984)?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

If none of your children has received special education during the current school year, skip questions <u>27</u> through <u>29.</u> Go ahead to question <u>30.</u>

---

27. For how many months during the current school year has your child received special education service?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
Months					
(1) 0-3	1	1	1	1	1
(2) 4-6	2	2	2	2	2
(3) 7-10	3	3	3	3	3

28. How satisfied were you with the special education service your child received during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) extremely satisfied	1	1	1	1	1
(2) somewhat satisfied	2	2	2	2	2
(3) satisfied	3	3	3	3	3
(4) somewhat dissatisfied	4	4	4	4	4
(5) extremely dissatisfied	5	5	5	5	5

29. In what setting was your child receiving special service during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) preschool for special needs children	1	1	1	1	1
(2) regular daycare/preschool	2	2	2	2	2
(3) elementary or secondary - public	3	3	3	3	3
(4) elementary or secondary - private	4	4	4	4	4
(5) residential school or treatment center	5	5	5	5	5
(6) sheltered workshop	6	6	6	6	6
(7) developmental achievement center (DAC)	7	7	7	7	7

30. For all of your children, how many meetings to prepare or review the IEP (Individual Education Program) did you attend during the current school year?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

31. How many IEP meetings were you invited to attend by school staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

If you did not attend any IEP (Individual Education Program) meetings during the current school year, skip questions 32 through 37. Go ahead to question 38.

32. Did you suggest that any specific additions or changes be made in the IEP?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) none were needed	3	3	3	3	3

33. During the IEP meetings, did you ask that anything be explained more fully?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) nothing needed further explanation	3	3	3	3	3
(4) I don't remember	4	4	4	4	4

34. Did you bring the IEP home to examine it before deciding whether or not to approve it?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

35. Were you dissatisfied with the content of the IEP you were asked to approve?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

36. If "yes" to question 35, did you withhold approval of the IEP?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

37. If the school staff did an assessment of your child during the current school year, did you meet with them before the IEP meeting for an explanation of the test results?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

38. Did you keep records on any of the following:

(1) your child's progress in school
(2) your child's progress at home
(3) test results
(4) conversations with the school about your child

39. If the school staff did an assessment of your child during the current school year, did you think the test results accurately showed your child's strengths and weaknesses?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

40. If "no" to question 39, did you request additional testing?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

41. If your child was assessed during the current school year, did you provide information that was included in the assessment?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

42. Did you withhold permission for your school staff to do an assessment during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2
(3) assessment not suggested	3	3	3	3	3

43. Did you initiate a request that an assessment of your child be done by the school staff during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

44. Did you have an outside assessment of your child done during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

45. Did you have any serious concerns about your child's progress during the current school year?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

46. If "yes" to question 45 did you talk about them with anyone at school?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

47. During the current school year were you involved in any of the following?

(1) conciliation conference
(2) due process hearing
(3) complaint procedure
(4) none of the above

48. During the current school year, did you request that your child receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

49. Prior to the current school year did you request that your child receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

50. During the current school year, did you provide information to any other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities?

(1) yes
(2) no

51. During the current school year, did you accompany any parents of handicapped children to a school conference or to their children's IEP meetings?

(1) yes
(2) no

52. During the current school year, how many times per month, on the average, did you talk with parents of handicapped children about any issues concerning your handicapped child?

0 1 2 4 8 12 More than 12

Directions: Please complete the next section whether or not your child has been receiving special education service during the current school year. Circle the number(s) that correspond(s) to your answer(s).

---

53. What is your age please?

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Under 20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Over 61

54. Is yours a single parent household?

(1) yes
(2) no

55. In your household, what does the female/mother currently do? (Choose one.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
full time work as homemaker	full time work outside home	part time work outside home	paid work inside the home

56. In your household, what does the male/father currently do? (Choose one.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
full time work as homemaker	full time work outside home	part time work outside home	paid work inside home

57. Please circle the last type of school attended by the following person in your household:

female/mother

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
grade school	high school	trade school	college	graduate school

58. Please circle the last type of school attended by the following person in your household:

male/father

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
grade school	high school	trade school	college	graduate school

59. How many children do you have?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Over 10

60. How many of your children have handicaps?

1 2 3 4 5 Over 5

61. What is the age of your handicapped child?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
	years					
(1)	0-3	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	4-6	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	7-10	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	11-15	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	16-20	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	Over 20	6	6	6	6	6

62. Where is your handicapped child currently living?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) my home	1	1	1	1	1
(2) foster home	2	2	2	2	2
(3) group home	3	3	3	3	3
(4) residential treatment center	4	4	4	4	4
(5) other (specify)_____	5	5	5	5	5

63. In which of the following categories is/are your child's handicap(s) included?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) visually impairment	1	1	1	1	1
(2) hearing impairment	2	2	2	2	2
(3) speech impairment	3	3	3	3	3
(4) cerebral palsy/spina bifida/ other physical handicaps	4	4	4	4	4
(5) epilepsy/diabetes/ heart/asthma/other health disorders	5	5	5	5	5
(6) developmental delay (4 years and under)	6	6	6	6	6
(7) learning disability	7	7	7	7	7
(8) mental retardation	8	8	8	8	8
(9) behavior problem	9	9	9	9	9
(10) emotional disturbance	10	10	10	10	10
(11) autism	11	11	11	11	11
(12) other_____	12	12	12	12	12

64. Please circle the level of service your child is currently receiving. (Explanations of service appear below the question.)

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	level 1	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	level 2	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	level 3	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	level 4	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	level 5	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	level 6	6	6	6	6	6
(7)	special preschool or DAC	7	7	7	7	7
(8)	my child is not receiving special education	8	8	8	8	8
(9)	I'm not sure	9	9	9	9	9

Level 1 = My child is in a regular education classroom with no special education services but is monitored (observed) for any difficulties she/he may be having.

Level 2 = My child is in a regular education classroom; the special education teacher gives assistance to the classroom teacher but does not work directly with my child.

Level 3 = My child is in a <u>regular education</u> classroom 50% or more of the day but a special education teacher works directly with him/her some of the time.

Level 4 = My child is in <u>special education</u> classes 50% or more of the day but spends some time with nonhandicapped children in regular education classes.

Level 5 = My child spends all her/his time in a special education class or special education school.

Level 6 = My child is in a special education program at a residential facility for handicapped children.

7 = My child is attending a preschool for special needs children or a DAC program.

65. Does your handicapped child have any medical problems that are currently causing great difficulty in day-to-day functioning?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

If yes, please describe_____

66. If your child is currently in school, how long has he/she been receiving special education service?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
years					
(1) less than 1	1	1	1	1	1
(2) 1-3	2	2	2	2	2
(3) 4-6	3	3	3	3	3
(4) 7-10	4	4	4	4	4
(5) more than 10	5	5	5	5	5
(6) my child is not in school	6	6	6	6	6

67. Have you ever attended any workshops/seminars/conferences on special education laws or the special education rights and responsibilities of parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes, a PACER workshop(s) (approximate date(s)_____?)

(2) yes, a workshop(s) other than one given by PACER

(name of sponsoring group(s)_____)

(3) no

68. Are there any sources besides workshops/seminars/conferences from which you've gained information on the educational rights of handicapped children?

(1) school personnel
(2) parents of other handicapped children
(3) PACER newsletter
(4) newsletter from another parent organization or disability group
(5) literature on special education laws from PACER Center
(6) literature on special education rights from another parent organization or disability group
(7) phone contact with PACER Center
(8) phone contact with another parent organization or disability group
(9) other_____

69. Are you currently a participant in any formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes
(2) no

if yes, which group(s)?_____

approximate date(s) you joined_____

70. If "no" to question 69, is there any group for parents of handicapped children in your area?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I don't know

71. Are you trained or employed in special education or in any other areas serving the needs of handicapped children?

(1) yes (please specify)_____
(2) no

72. Did you contact PACER or any other parent organization for information regarding your child's special education program during the current school year?

(1) yes, I contacted PACER and received written information on the special education laws
(2) yes, I contacted PACER once and received specific answers to my questions over the phone
(3) yes, I contacted PACER several times by phone and discussed at length concerns about my child's education
(4) yes, I contacted another parent organiation regarding my child's special education program (please specify organization)_____
(5) no

73. If you need to dial (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, would you be more likely to contact PACER by phone if PACER had a toll free number rather than its current system of accepting collect calls from parents?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I do not need to dial (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area

74. Please rate each of the following according to its importance in meeting your current needs.

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(1) regular meetings with parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) information about your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) information on available preschool programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) information on the differences in systems between preschool and elementary school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) information on available elementary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) information on available secondary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) in-depth information on planning and writing an IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6
(8) in-depth information on assessment procedures and instruments used in schools	1	2	3	4	5	6
(9) in-depth information on conciliation conferences, due process hearings, and complaint procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6
(10) information on community resources: medical personnel skilled in dealing with handicapped children, in-home child care, out of home child care, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(11) family training: methods of teaching, modifying behavior, managing physical disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
(12) information on the nature and use of drugs in the management of some disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(13) information on the special vulnerability of handicapped persons to sexual abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
(14) advocacy training in seeking services for your child	1	2	3	4	5	6
(15) training in effective communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
(16) information on stress in families with a handicapped child and methods for dealing with it	1	2	3	4	5	6
(17) aid with the shock, anger, denial, acceptance surrounding your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(18) information on early planning for your child's years after his/her completion of school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(19) information on the preparation of a will providing care for your handicapped child in case of your death	1	2	3	4	5	6
(20) information on the use of computers in special education	1	2	3	4	5	6
(21) information on the impact of minimum competency testing on special education students	1	2	3	4	5	6
(22) information comparing the benefits of teaching academic skills versus independent living and vocational skills in school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(23) research results on the educational effectiveness of various teaching techniques and classroom environments	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(24) information on how parents can promote effective service for handicapped students in the least restrictive educational setting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(25) information on how parents can encourage the creation of a greater number and variety of work settings, living arrangements, and continuing education options for handicapped young adults after they have completed their school years	1	2	3	4	5	6
(26) opportunities for school staff to learn more about the nature of your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(27) opportunities for school staff to learn more about the emotional needs of parents having a handicapped child	1	2	3	4	5	6
(28) information for school staff on methods of increasing professional openness to involvement by parents in education	1	2	3	4	5	6
(29) increased sensitivity of nonhandicapped students to the feelings and needs of handicapped students	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX 2

NAME_____DATE_____
(Please Print)

ADDRESS_____CITY_____STATE____ZIP_____
(Please Print)

PHONE NUMBER (HOME)_____ (WORK)_____

All information from this questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence. Names will be removed before recording any data.

Return to: PACER Center, Inc.
4701 Chicago Ave. S.
Mpls., MN 55407

Return by:

The date last school year you attended the PACER workshop on special education laws was:

Directions: Please circle the number that corresponds best with how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

		Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1.	I know how to use my child's assessment results to decide what should be contained in her/his Individual Education Program (IEP).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I know how to use the goals and objectives on my child's IEP to monitor his/her progress during the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am familiar enough with the special education laws to know if the school is violating any portion of them.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I know which procedures are provided in the special education laws to aid me in the solution of disagreements I might have with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	It is up to me to watch that the special education laws/regulations for my child are being obeyed, and to question the school if they are not.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I generally feel alone in dealing with situations surrounding my child's handicap(s).	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please circle your response choice.

7. To provide continuity in a child's program as she/he gets older, special education laws require that teaching goals begun on one IEP (Individual Education Program) must be continued on the following IEP.

   (1) Yes
   (2) No
   (3) I'm not sure

8. The purpose of the IEP meeting as defined by the special education laws is to provide an opportunity for the parent(s) to approve the IEP the school staff has prepared.

   (1) Yes
   (2) No
   (3) I'm not sure

9. If parents of a child who has been receiving special education service fail to notify the school of their approval of the upcoming year's IEP, the school must continue to use the past year's IEP for which it has already received the parents' approval.

(1) Yes
(2) No
(3) I'm not sure

10. If a school refuses a parent's request to test his/her child, the parent can get outside testing done by qualified professionals and be guaranteed the school will pay for it.

(1) Yes
(2) No
(3) I'm not sure

11. If parents disagree with the results of their child's school assessment, they can get an outside assessment done by qualified professionals but the school can refuse to consider these results at the IEP staffing.

(1) Yes
(2) No
(3) I'm not sure

12. In Minnesota, public school districts are required to provide a free appropriate education for handicapped children from age __(a)__ to age __(b)__ or to the completion of high school.
(Circle your choice for (a) and for (b))

(a) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not sure

(b) 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 Not sure

13. If you were to move from state to state with your handicapped child, which of the following would always be required by law?
(Choose any that are correct.)

(1) the availability of a due process hearing
(2) written notification to parent(s) by the school of its intention to assess the child
(3) a conciliation conference to resolve differences between parent(s) and the school
(4) none of the above
(5) I'm not sure

14. A handicapped child's right to free special education depends on the school district's having sufficient money to provide appropriate programs for that child.

(1) Yes
(2) No
(3) I'm not sure

UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE, WHEN COMPLETING THIS SECTION (QUESTIONS 15-36) BASE YOUR ANSWERS ON THE TIME PERIOD BEGINNING FROM THE DATE YOU ATTENDED THE PACER WORKSHOP (LISTED ON THE COVER) AND ENDING WITH TODAY'S DATE.

Directions: Please circle the number corresponding to your answer. If you have one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "First Child." If you have more than one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "Second Child," "Third Child," etc.

15. Was your child receiving special education service at the time you attended the PACER workshop listed on the cover?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

16. Has your child received special education service at any time during the period beginning from the date you attended the PACER workshop to today's date?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

If none of your children have been receiving special education service <u>during this period,</u> skip questions 17 through 26. Go ahead to question 27.

17. For how many months in the period since you attended the workshop until today has your child received special education service?

Months	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) 0-3	1	1	1	1	1
(2) 4-6	2	2	2	2	2
(3) 7-10	3	3	3	3	3
(4) 11-14	4	4	4	4	4
(5) 15-18	5	5	5	5	5

18. How satisfied were you with the special education service your child received during this period?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) extremely satisfied	1	1	1	1	1
(2) somewhat satisfied	2	2	2	2	2
(3) satisfied	3	3	3	3	3
(4) somewhat dissatisfied	4	4	4	4	4
(5) extremely dissatisfied	5	5	5	5	5

19. During this period, in what setting was your child receiving special service?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) developmental achievement center (DAC)	1	1	1	1	1
(2) preschool for special needs children	2	2	2	2	2
(3) regular daycare/preschool	3	3	3	3	3
(4) elementary or secondary - public	4	4	4	4	4
(5) elementary or secondary - private	5	5	5	5	5
(6) residential school or treatment center	6	6	6	6	6
(7) sheltered workshop	7	7	7	7	7

20. For all of your children receiving special education service during this period, how many meetings to prepare or review the IEP did you attend?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

21. How many IEP meetings were you invited to attend by school staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

If you did not attend any IEP (Individual Education Program) meetings during the period from the date of the PACER workshop you attended to today's date, skip questions 22 through 26. Go ahead to question 27.

22. Did you suggest that any specific additions or changes be made in the IEP?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	none were needed	3	3	3	3	3

23. Did you bring the IEP home to examine it before deciding whether or not to approve it?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

24. Were you dissatisfied with the content of the IEP you were asked to approve?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

25. If "yes" to question 24, did you withhold approval of the IEP?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

26. If the school staff did an assessment of your child during this period, did you meet with them before the IEP meeting for an explanation of the test results?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

27. During this period, if the school staff did an assessment, did you think the test results accurately showed your child's strengths and weaknesses?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	assessment not done	3	3	3	3	3

28. If "no" to question 28, did you request additional testing?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

29. Did you withhold permission for your school staff to do an assessment?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	assessment not suggested	3	3	3	3	3

30. Did you initiate a request that an assessment of your child be done by the school staff during this period?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

31. Did you have an outside assessment of your child done during this period?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

32. During this period, did you request that your child receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

33. Prior to this period, did you request that your child receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1) yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2) no	2	2	2	2	2

34. During this period, did you provide information to any other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities?

(1) yes
(2) no

35. During this period, did you accompany any parents of handicapped children to a school conference or to their children's IEP meetings?

(1) yes
(2) no

36. On the average, how many times per month did you talk with parents of handicapped children about any issues concerning your handicapped child?

0 1 2 4 8 12 More than 12

Directions: Please complete the next section whether or not your child has been receiving special education service since you attended the PACER workshop. Circle the number(s) that correspond(s) to your answer(s).

---

37. What was your purpose in having gone to the PACER workshop listed on the cover? (Choose any that apply.)

(1) to gain information about the educational rights of handicapped children
(2) to review recent changes in special education laws/regulations
(3) to gain information in response to a specific problem at school
(4) to meet other parents of handicapped children
(5) to get support from others
(6) other (please specify)_____

38. Since the date of the PACER workshop listed on the cover, have you attended any workshops/seminars/conferences on special education laws or the special education rights and responsibilities of parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes, another PACER workshop (approximate date_____)

(2) yes, a workshop other than one given by PACER

(name of sponsoring group_____)

(approximate date_____)

(3) no

39. Since the date of the PACER workshop listed on the cover, are there any sources besides workshops/seminars/conferences from which you've gained information on the educational rights of handicapped children?

(1) school personnel
(2) parents of other handicapped children
(3) PACER newsletter
(4) newsletter from another parent organization or disability group
(5) literature on special education laws from PACER Center
(6) literature on special education rights from another parent organization or disability group
(7) phone contact with PACER Center
(8) phone contact with another parent organization or disability group
(9) other_____

40. Are you currently a participant in any formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes
(2) no

if yes, which group(s)?_____
approximate date(s) you joined_____

41. Have you referred to the packet of written materials you received at the PACER workshop? (Circle any that apply.)

(1) no, I have not referred to the materials since the workshop

(2) yes, to provide myself with general information about special education issues

(3) yes, to address a specific concern about my child's special education

(4) yes, to provide information about special education laws to another parent or to a professional

(5) yes, to find PACER's phone number

(6) yes, for other reasons (specify)_____

(7) yes, but the materials did not contain the information I needed (specify)_____

42. The following are topics discussed by the speakers at the PACER workshop you attended. Circle any topic on which you have needed more information to deal with your handicapped child's education than you were given at the workshop.

(1) history of the special education laws

(2) rights guaranteed by special education laws

(3) assessment

(4) IEP (Individual Education Program)

(5) conciliation conferences; due process hearings; complaint procedures

(6) techniques for communicating with school staff

43. What information, other than that provided at the PACER workshop, do you think it is important for parents to know to help them get their handicapped child a good education?

_____

_____

_____

44. As a result of the information presented at the PACER workshop, did you decide there were issues about your handicapped child's education that needed to be discussed with school staff?

(1) no, there were no issues about my child's program that needed to be discussed with school staff

(2) no, I was already aware before attending the workshop of issues needing to be discussed with school staff

(3) yes, at the workshop I became aware of issues that needed to be discussed with school staff

Directions: Please circle your response choice.

45. How important was the PACER workshop to your growth in the following areas? (Circle the number that corresponds to your response choice.)	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I came to the workshop comfortable in this area
(1) awareness that my child and I have rights guaranteed by the special education laws that cannot be taken away	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) awareness of the procedures available within special education laws to aid me in resolving disagreements with school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) determination to discuss my concerns about my child's program with school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) comfortableness in asking questions about decisions made by school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) awareness of the importance of being actively involved in planning my child's school program	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) awareness of the importance of gathering my information and thoughts on my child's performance and needs before going into an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) awareness of my right to monitor the quality of my child's school program	1	2	3	4	5	6
(8) awareness that my concerns about my child's education are shared by parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6
(9) comfortableness in discussing my concerns about my handicapped child and his/her education with others	1	2	3	4	5	6

46. Please rate the amount of change (if any) that has occurred in how often you do the following activities since you attended the PACER workshop.

	Much More Often	Slightly More Often	Same as Before the Workshop	Slightly Less Often	Much Less Often
(1) attending IEP meetings	1	2	3	4	5
(2) going to IEP meetings with ideas about what I want in my child's education program	1	2	3	4	5
(3) taking another person with me when I go to IEP meetings	1	2	3	4	5
(4) keeping written records on school related matters	1	2	3	4	5
(5) reviewing my child's school file	1	2	3	4	5
(6) requesting copies of assessments, etc. from the school file	1	2	3	4	5
(7) contacting the teacher about my child's progress in school	1	2	3	4	5
(8) visiting my child's classroom	1	2	3	4	5
(9) closely following my child's progress in school and at home	1	2	3	4	5
(10) working with my child at home on school related activities	1	2	3	4	5
(11) contacting the teacher about my observations of my child at home	1	2	3	4	5
(12) making contact with parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5
(13) seeking professional services for my handicapped child outside the school system	1	2	3	4	5
(14) attending school board meetings	1	2	3	4	5

47. If you need to dial (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, would you be more likely to contact PACER by phone if PACER had a toll free number rather than its current system of accepting collect calls from parents?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I do not need to dial (1) to call the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area

---

Directions: Please circle your response choice.

---

48. What is your age please?

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Under 20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Over 61

49. Is yours a single parent household?

(1) yes
(2) no

50. In your household, what does the female/mother currently do? (Choose one.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
full time work as homemaker	full time work outside home	part time work outside home	paid work inside the home

51. In your household, what does the male/father currently do? (Choose one.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
full time work as homemaker	full time work outside home	part time work outside home	paid work inside home

52. In which category would you place your family income?

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
low	low middle	middle	upper middle	high

53. Please circle the last type of school attended by the following person in your household:

female/mother

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
grade school	high school	trade school	college	graduate school

54. Please circle the last type of school attended by the following person in your household:

male/father

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
grade school	high school	trade school	college	graduate school

55. How many children do you have?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Over 10

56. How many of your children have handicaps?

1 2 3 4 5 Over 5

57. What is the age of your handicapped child?

	years	First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	0-3	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	4-6	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	7-10	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	11-15	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	16-20	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	Over 20	6	6	6	6	6

58. In which of the following categories is/are your child's handicap(s) included?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	visually impairment	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	hearing impairment	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	speech impairment	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	cerebral palsy/spina bifida/ other physical handicaps	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	epilepsy/diabetes/ heart/asthma/other health disorders	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	developmental delay (4 years and under)	6	6	6	6	6
(7)	learning disability	7	7	7	7	7
(8)	mental retardation	8	8	8	8	8
(9)	behavior problem	9	9	9	9	9
(10)	emotional disturbance	10	10	10	10	10
(11)	autism	11	11	11	11	11
(12)	other_____	12	12	12	12	12

59. Please circle the level of service your child is currently receiving. (Explanations of service appear below the question.)

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	level 1	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	level 2	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	level 3	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	level 4	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	level 5	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	level 6	6	6	6	6	6
(7)	special preschool or DAC	7	7	7	7	7
(8)	my child is not receiving special education	8	8	8	8	8
(9)	I'm not sure	9	9	9	9	9

Level 1 = My child is in a regular education classroom with no special education services but is monitored (observed) for any difficulties she/he may be having.

Level 2 = My child is in a regular education classroom; the special education teacher gives assistance to the classroom teacher but does not work directly with my child.

Level 3 = My child is in a regular education classroom 50% or more of the day but a special education teacher works directly with him/her some of the time.

Level 4 = My child is in special education classes 50% or more of the day but spends some time with nonhandicapped children in regular education classes.

Level 5 = My child spends all her/his time in a special education class or special education school.

Level 6 = My child is in a special education program at a residential facility for handicapped children.

7 = My child is attending a preschool for special needs children or a DAC program.

60. Please rate each of the following according to its importance in meeting your current needs.

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(1) regular meetings with parents of other handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) information about your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) information on available preschool programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) information on the differences in systems between preschool and elementary school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) information on available elementary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) information on available secondary school programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) in-depth information on planning and writing an IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6
(8) in-depth information on assessment procedures and instruments used in schools	1	2	3	4	5	6
(9) in-depth information on conciliation conferences, due process hearings, and complaint procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6
(10) information on community resources: medical personnel skilled in dealing with handicapped children, in-home child care, out of home child care, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(11) family training: methods of teaching, modifying behavior, managing physical disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
(12) information on the nature and use of drugs in the management of some disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(13) information on the special vulnerability of handicapped persons to sexual abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
(14) advocacy training in seeking services for your child	1	2	3	4	5	6
(15) training in effective communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
(16) information on stress in families with a handicapped child and methods for dealing with it	1	2	3	4	5	6
(17) aid with the shock, anger, denial, acceptance surrounding your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(18) information on early planning for your child's years after his/her completion of school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(19) information on the preparation of a will providing care for your handicapped child in case of your death	1	2	3	4	5	6
(20) information on the use of computers in special education	1	2	3	4	5	6
(21) information on the impact of minimum competency testing on special education students	1	2	3	4	5	6
(22) information comparing the benefits of teaching academic skills versus independent living and vocational skills in school	1	2	3	4	5	6
(23) research results on the educational effectiveness of various teaching techniques and classroom environments	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I am not familiar with this topic
(24) information on how parents can promote effective service for handicapped students in the least restrictive educational setting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(25) information on how parents can encourage the creation of a greater number and variety of work settings, living arrangements, and continuing education options for handicapped young adults after they have completed their school years	1	2	3	4	5	6
(26) opportunities for school staff to learn more about the nature of your child's handicap(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(27) opportunities for school staff to learn more about the emotional needs of parents having a handicapped child	1	2	3	4	5	6
(28) information for school staff on methods of increasing professional openness to involvement by parents in education	1	2	3	4	5	6
(29) increased sensitivity of nonhandicapped students to the feelings and needs of handicapped students	1	2	3	4	5	6

61. IF YOUR HANDICAPPED SON/DAUGHTER IS 12 YEARS OR OLDER, please rate each of the following according to its importance in meeting your current needs.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	I am not familiar with this topic
(1) information on the assessment of vocational skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) information on the assessment of independent living skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) information on the school's role in assessing vocational and independent living skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) information on vocational training: job seeking skills, work adjustment skills, vocational skills, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) information on training of independent living skills: food and nutrition, personal hygiene, transportation skills, consumer skills, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) information on sex education programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) information on writing goals for vocational training or independent living skills training into the IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	I am not familiar with this topic
(8) information on noncompetitive work situations: day activity centers, sheltered workshops, guided competitive employment, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(9) information on job placement services	1	2	3	4	5	6
(10) information on group homes and other supervised living situations	1	2	3	4	5	6
(11) information on semi-independent living situations: adult board and room residences, supervised resident apartments, transitional independent living situations, homemaker services, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
(12) information on recreational programs and social groups for your son/daughter	1	2	3	4	5	6
(13) information on county, state, and federal income support programs for your son/daughter	1	2	3	4	5	6
(14) information on Section 504 legal protections against discrimination based on handicap in housing, employment, training programs, post secondary education, transportation, and access to public services	1	2	3	4	5	6

--OVER --

62. IF YOUR HANDICAPPED SON/DAUGHTER, IS 12 YEARS OR OLDER, please rate the interest you think HE/SHE would have in attending a workshop on any of the following.

	Great Interest	Slight Interest	Neither Interested not Disinterested	Slight Disinterest	Great Disinterest	I am not familiar with this topic
(1) information on job placement services	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) information on semi-independent living situations	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) information on county, state and federal income maintenance programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) information on Section 504 protections against discrimination based on handicap	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) information on recreational programs and social groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) information on support groups for handicapped youth or young adults	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) information on sexual abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
(8) information on his/her disability	1	2	3	4	5	6
(9) advocacy training in seeking community services	1	2	3	4	5	6
(10) training in effective communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
(11) training in building his/her sense of self-worth	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX 3

1. The following are descriptions of advocacy training workshops PACER presented last year. Please circle the number corresponding to the workshop(s) you recall having attended.

   1) Board of Education v. Rowley: Supreme Court case involving P.L. 94-142 - Larry Ringer, Legal Advocacy for Developmentally Disabled Persons in Mn (7/27/82; McRae Park-Mpls.)

   2) proposed changes in federal special education regulations - Fred Weintraub, Department of Governmental Regulations, CEC; Larry Ringer, Legal Advocacy for Developmentally Disabled Persons in Mn; Curt Michka, Legal Advocacy Program for Hearing Impaired Persons (9/10/82; McRae Park-Mpls.)

   3) proposed changes in federal special education regulations, and federal appropriations for special education - luncheon with Pat Morrissey, staff member of the House Select Subcommittee on Education (10/16/82; Nicollet Island Inn-Mpls.)

   4) legal aspects of suspension, expulsion in special education - Melvin Goldberg, William Mitchell School of Law, and proposed changes in state special education regulations - Norena Hale, Mn. Department of Education (10/27/82; McRae Park-Mpls.)

   5) gaining access to the media, and developing positive media presentations - James Green, Grey-North Advertising (5/17-18/83; McRae park-Mpls.)

   6) training for future presenters of PACER parent workshops on the special education laws (5/26/83; McRae Park-Mpls.)

2. The following are goals of PACER advocacy training workshops. Please indicate the degree to which the workshop(s) met these goals for you.

	great degree				not at all	don't recall
1) to provide an occassion for participants to exchange experiences and ideas with other advocates	1	2	3	4	5	6
2) to provide a source of factual information that would not otherwise be available to participants	1	2	3	4	5	6
3) to provide participants an environment in which past advocacy efforts for handicapped children and youth are reinforced and continued advocacy efforts are supported	1	2	3	4	5	6
4) to provide an occasion for participants to become familiar with the concerns of others through questions and comments from the audience	1	2	3	4	5	6
5) to provide an opportunity for participants to become familiar with the particular perspective of a parent advocacy organization on special education issues	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. Did the advocacy training workshop(s) you attended serve any purposes for you other than those listed above in question two?

   1) yes (please specify)_____

   2) no

   3) I don't recall

4. Are there purposes you would have liked the advocacy training workshop(s) you attended to have served that they did not?

   1) yes (please specify)_____

   2) no

   3) I don't recall

5. How important to your effectiveness as an advocate was the information you received last year at the PACER workshop(s)? (For those people who attended more than one workshop, please respond for each individual workshop. Use the number from question one that corresponds to the workshop you attended and enter it in the appropriate space in the column to the left.)

	extremely important				not at all important	don't recall
workshop #_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
workshop #_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
workshop #_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. To what degree would it be helpful in advocacy training workshops to have current issues in special education discussed in a debate format with speakers representing opposing views?

very helpful				not at all helpful	no opinion
1	2	3	4	5	6

7. Do you have suggestions for other formats that could be used in advocacy training workshops to present current issues in special education?_____

8. What issues/topics would you like PACER to address in future advocacy workshops?

1._____

2._____

3._____

9. Did you have the opportunity to engage in any of the following advocacy activities since the time you attended the PACER workshop(s) listed in question one?

	yes	no
1) I communicated with school staff about my handicapped child's educational program in person and/or in writing.	1	2
2) I provided parents information, counsel or personal participation for IEP meetings, conciliation conferences, due process or complaint procedures.	1	2
3) I helped form a parent group and/or was actively involved in program planning for a parent group whose meetings and activities involved special education issues.	1	2
4) I wrote news articles, letters to the editor, or letters to legislators or to other policy makers on special education topics.	1	2
5) I spoke at meetings of the school board or of church, civic or parent groups about special education issues.	1	2
6) I was on the paid or volunteer staff of a disability organization, or on an advisory board or board of directors for such an organization.	1	2
7) I spoke at, helped plan, or otherwise participated in the running of a workshop or conference on special education.	1	2
8) I lobbied legislators or persons on other policy making boards/organizations and/or provided testimony to such groups on special education issues.	1	2
9) I was a special education aide, teacher or administrator, or a staff member of a college department, state or regulatory agency that addresses special education issues.	1	2
10) I provided technical assistance or consultation to parent groups, educators, administrators, or legislators in areas of special education.	1	2
11) I was involved in research or policy making in areas of special education.	1	2

10. I engaged in the following advocacy activites not listed above in question 9:_____

11. Are there any skills you would like to gain that would be helpful in pursuing the advocacy activities listed in question 9?_____

12. What resources would you like to have available to support you in your advocacy activities?

1) in-depth information on planning and writing an IEP

2) in-depth information on assessment: instruments, procedures, the relation of assessment results to educational programming

3) in-depth information on legally established procedures for resolving disagreements: conciliation conferences, due process hearings, complaint procedures

4) assertiveness training with a focus on IEP meetings: role playing in small groups, video tape feedback, etc.

5) information on educational research on the efficacy of special education, of various teaching techniques, and of school environments for specific handicapping conditions

(CONTINUED)

6) listings of resources available to parents, e.g. local parent support groups, child-care services, sources for outside assessments, out-of-home residences for handicapped children and adults, etc.

7) regular meetings of persons engaged in similar types of advocacy to exchange ideas, information, performance feedback

8) updates on issues for complaint procedures and compliance deviations from special education rules and regulations within Minnesota

9) information or resources available to students completing school e.g. vocational training programs, income maintenance, etc.

10) information on the appropriate person (line of authority) to address regarding your advocacy concerns within school districts, federal and state legislatures and agencies

13. What could parents be taught that would help them contribute to the effectiveness of their handicapped child's educational program?_____

14. In your opinion, what <u>current</u> issues in special education are most in need of advocacy efforts?_____

_____

15. In your opinion, what do you think will be the <u>future</u> issues in special education to which advocates will have to direct their attention?_____

16. Would any of the following activities if done by PACER serve to improve the quality of special education in Minnesota? (circle any you think would help)

1) becoming involved in efforts to improve the quality of <u>regular</u> education

2) preparing presentations for regular education teachers to familiarize them with the special education laws

3) preparing presentations and materials on the special education laws for parents with limited educational backgrounds

4) providing for professionals a source of information on educational issues e.g., surrogate rules, transition needs, 0-4 legislation, impediments to parental involvement in special eduation, etc.

5) other_____

	<u>extremely desirable</u>				<u>extremely undesirable</u>
17. How desirable would you consider laws and rules guaranteeing <u>gifted</u> children a free public education appropriate to their individual needs?	1	2	3	4	5
18. How desirable would you consider uniform state entrance and exit criteria for special education service?	1	2	3	4	5
19. How desirable would you consider non-categorical special education programs (i.e., special education service based on assessed needs without assignment of a disability category)?	1	2	3	4	5
20. How desirable would you consider legislation mandating special education service from birth through four years of age?	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 4

NAME_____DATE_____
(Please Print)

ADDRESS_____CITY_____STATE___ZIP_____
(Please Print)

PHONE NUMBER (HOME)_____ (WORK)_____

Please complete this questionnaire whether or not your child(ren) has/have been receiving special education service during the current school year. All information from this questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence. Your name will be removed before recording the data.

Return to: PACER Center, Inc.
4701 Chicago Ave. So.
Mpls., MN 55407

Return by: May 29,1984

Directions: Please circle the number that corresponds best with how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

		Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1.	I would press for a change in my child's special education services even if doing so would damage a comfortable relationship with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I know which procedures are provided in the special education laws to aid me in the solution of disagreements I might have with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	It is up to me to watch that the special education laws/regulations for my child are being obeyed, and to question the school if they are not.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I generally feel alone in dealing with situations surrounding my child's handicap(s).	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please circle your response choice.

5. Approximately how many times did you call PACER during the 1982-83 school year to obtain information about a concern related to your handicapped child(ren) or the education of handicapped children?

1 2 3 4 5 more than 5

6. If your answer to number 5 was more than 1, when you called PACER again were you calling about: (Circle any that apply.)

(1) the same concern/issue
(2) new issue(s) related to your original concern/issue
(3) an entirely different concern/issue
(4) I don't recall

7. Had you contacted PACER prior to the 1982-83 school year about a concern related to your handicapped child(ren) or the education of handicapped children?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I don't recall

8. Have you contacted PACER during this current school year (1983-84) about a concern related to your handicapped child(ren) or the education of handicapped children?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I don't recall

9. At what point in your attempt to deal with your concern or get information on a particular subject, did you contact PACER? (Circle any that apply)

(1) PACER was the first source I went to for information
(2) I contacted PACER to supplement or confirm information I already had on a concern/subject
(3) Other (please specify)_____
(4) I don't recall

Directions: Please circle the number that corresponds best with how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

---

10. In the telephone contact(s) you had with PACER did you feel that:	Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree	I don't recall	Does not Apply
(1) the concern(s)/issue(s) about which you called was/were understood by the parent advisor with whom you spoke	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(2) the information you received was directly related to your concerns	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(3) the information you received was realistic (i.e. did not raise false hopes)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(4) the suggestions for action were possible for you to carry out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(5) the referral to another resource or agency was helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. How important was the telephone contact(s) you had with PACER to your growth in the following areas? (Circle the number that corresponds to your response choice.)

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not Important	I was comfortable in this area before I called PACER
(1) awareness that my child and I have rights guaranteed by the special education laws that cannot be taken away	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) awareness of the procedures available within special education laws to aid me in resolving disagreements with school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) determination to discuss my concerns about my child's program with school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) comfortableness in asking questions about decisions made by school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) awareness of the importance of being actively involved in planning my child's school program	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) awareness of the importance of gathering my information and thoughts on my child's performance and needs before going into an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) comfortableness in discussing my concerns about my handicapped child and his/her education with others	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. If you have received written materials (i.e. booklets such as Parents Can Be The Key, the PACER newsletter, etc.) from PACER, have you referred to any of the information contained in these materials? (Circle any that apply.)

(1) I did not receive written materials from PACER
(2) I did receive written materials from PACER, but I did not have a need to refer to them
(3) yes, I referred to them to address a specific conern about my child's special education
(4) yes, I referred to them to provide information about special education laws to another parent or to a professional
(5) yes, I referred to them to find PACER's phone number
(6) yes, I referred to them for other reasons (specify)_____
(7) yes, I referred to them but the materials did not contain the information I needed (specify)_____
(8) I don't recall

13. What information, other than that provided over the phone, or in the materials you received, do you think is important for parents to know to help their handicapped child receive a good education?

_____

_____

_____

14. As a result of the information you received from PACER by phone or mail, did you decide there were additional issues (other than the concern about which you called) about your handicapped child's education that needed to be discussed with school staff?

(1) no, there were no additional issues about my child's program that needed to be discussed with school staff

(2) no, I was already aware before my contact with PACER of additional issues needing to be discussed with school staff

(3) yes, as a result of my contact with PACER, I became aware of additional issues that needed to be discussed with school staff

15. Please circle the number(s) that best describes you:

(1) parent/guardian of a handicapped child
(2) foster parent of a handicapped child
(3) special education professional
(4) representative/advocate from disability organization/group
(5) other (please specify)_____

16. Have you ever attended any workshops/seminars/conferences on special education laws or the special education rights and responsibilities of parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes, a PACER workshop(s) (how many_____?)

(2) yes, a workshop(s) other than one given by PACER

(name of sponsoring group(s)_____)

(3) no

17. Are there any sources besides workshops/seminars/conferences from which you've gained information on the educational rights of handicapped children?

(1) school personnel
(2) parents of other handicapped children
(3) PACER newsletter
(4) newsletter from another parent organization or disability group
(5) literature on special education laws from PACER Center
(6) literature on special education rights from another parent organization or disability group
(7) phone contact with PACER Center
(8) phone contact with another parent organization or disability group
(9) other_____

18. Are you currently a participant in any formal or informal groups for parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes
(2) no

if yes, which group(s)?_____

approximate date(s) you joined_____

19. If "no" to question 18, is there any group for parents of handicapped children in your area?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I don't know

20. If "no" to question 19, would you like to see a group for parents of handicapped children formed in your area?

(1) yes
(2) no

21. During the 1982-83 school year, were you involved in any of the following?

(1) conciliation conference
(2) due process hearing
(3) complaint procedure
(4) none of the above

22. Have you ever provided information to any other parents of handicapped children on special education rights and responsibilities?

(1) yes
(2) no

23. Have you ever recommended PACER as a resource to any parents of handicapped children?

(1) yes
(2) no
(3) I don't recall

Questions 24-26 are for parents, guardians or foster parents of handicapped children.

Directions: Please circle the number corresponding to your answer(s). If you have one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "First Child." If you have more than one handicapped child, circle the number for your answer in the column under "Second Child," "Third Child," etc.

24. What is the age of your handicapped child?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
	years					
(1)	0-3	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	4-6	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	7-10	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	11-15	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	16-20	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	Over 20 monitor	6	6	6	6	6

25. In which of the following categories is/are your child's handicap(s) included?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	visual impairment	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	hearing impairment	2	2	2	2	2
(3)	speech impairment	3	3	3	3	3
(4)	cerebral palsy/spina bifida/ other physical handicaps	4	4	4	4	4
(5)	epilepsy/diabetes/ heart/asthma/other health disorders	5	5	5	5	5
(6)	developmental delay (4 years and under)	6	6	6	6	6
(7)	learning disability	7	7	7	7	7
(8)	mental retardation	8	8	8	8	8
(9)	behavior problem	9	9	9	9	9
(10)	emotional disturbance	10	10	10	10	10
(11)	autism	11	11	11	11	11
(12)	other_____	12	12	12	12	12

26. Have you ever requested that your child receive special education service that the school was not offering him/her at the time?

		First Child	Second Child	Third Child	Fourth Child	Fifth Child
(1)	yes	1	1	1	1	1
(2)	no	2	2	2	2	2

APPENDIX 5

A. In what Minnesota special education region is your school district located?_____

B. Are you the director of a special education cooperative?

1. yes 2. no

C. For how many years have you been a special education director in MN?_____

D. How familiar are you with PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights)? (circle any that apply)

1. I have not heard of PACER.
2. I am familiar with the name but do not specifically know what PACER does.
3. I usually read the PACERETTER (gold newsletter).
4. I have a subscription to the ADVOCATE newsletter.
5. I have heard of PACER's COUNT ME IN programs for increasing regular education students' awareness of handicapping conditions.
6. I have attended an in-service, professional meeting, and/or college course at which PACER presented material.
7. I have attended a PACER workshop for parents on special education laws and/or communication techniques.
8. I have called PACER for information.
9. PACER has been involved in discussions between school staff and parents regarding special education service for one or more children in this district.
10. Other_____

	extremely desirable				extremely undesirable
E. How desirable would you consider laws and rules guaranteeing gifted children a free public education appropriate to their individual needs?	1	2	3	4	5
F. How desirable would you consider uniform state entrance and exit criteria for special education service?	1	2	3	4	5
G. How desirable would you consider non-categorical special education programs (i.e., special education service based on assessed needs without assignment of a disability category)?	1	2	3	4	5
H. How desirable would you consider legislation mandating special education service from birth through four years of age?	1	2	3	4	5
I. How desirable would you consider legislation mandating that students placed in treatment centers for E/BD needs be provided special education service at the expense of their home districts regardless of whether or not they had been receiving special education service prior to placement?	1	2	3	4	5

J. How likely is it that minimum competency testing will be a reality for regular education students in your district within the next three years?

extremely likely				extremely unlikely	I don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6

K. Would any of the following activities, if done by a statewide parent organization representing multiple disability groups (such as PACER), serve to improve the quality of special education? (circle any you think would help)

1) becoming involved in efforts to improve the quality of regular education
2) preparing presentations for regular education teachers to familiarize them with the special education laws
3) preparing presentations and materials on the special education laws for parents with limited educational backgrounds
4) providing for professionals a source of information on educational issues e.g., surrogate rules, transition needs, 0-4 legislation, impediments to parental involvement in special education, etc.
5) other_____

L. Are there any services for parents and/or professionals that could be provided by a statewide parent organization representing multiple disability groups that would help eliminate some of the difficulties you encounter in providing students appropriate special education?

_____

_____

M. Are there any system changes for which parents could advocate that would facilitate your efforts to provide students appropriate special education?

_____

_____

N. In your opinion, what needs of parents of handicapped children should be addressed to increase the effectiveness of their children's special education?

_____

_____

The remaining items are for directors who have had a PACER workshop in their district, who have attended a PACER workshop for parents, or who have been involved in discussions with parents about special education service in which PACER has been a participant.

O. The following are selected objectives of PACER. In your perception, to what degree does PACER's performance reflect these objectives?

	great degree				not at all	don't know
1) to provide parents information that is beneficial to securing and/or improving their children's special education	1	2	3	4	5	6
2) to increase professionals' awareness that they are welcome to attend PACER's workshops for parents on the special education laws	1	2	3	4	5	6
3) to promote the view that special education teachers are partners with parents in advocating for the educational needs of handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6
4) to educate parents to base their requests for special education service on the assessed needs of the child	1	2	3	4	5	6
5) to educate parents that an IEP is intended to serve the child's needs and not to promote the specific philosophies of either parents or staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
6) to foster mutual respect between professionals and parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
7) to be accessible to professionals for information on matters of special education service	1	2	3	4	5	6
8) to be fair to all concerned parties when the Center (PACER) is involved in discussions between school staff and parents about special education service for a particular child	1	2	3	4	5	6
9) to increase constructive communication between school staff and parents when the Center (PACER) is involved in discussions about special education service for a particular child	1	2	3	4	5	6
10) to communicate to the appropriate special education director parents' concerns about which the Center has been contacted if the parents have given PACER permission to do so	1	2	3	4	5	6

P. If PACER has presented a workshop in your district:

Do you have any suggestions for changes in the way PACER makes advance contact and preparation for the workshop within a district?

_____

_____

Q. If you have attended a PACER workshop for parents:

Is there any information you think it is important for parents to receive which was not included in the presentation?

_____

_____

Do you have any suggestions for methods of increasing attendance at workshops by parents, professionals, or parents with limited educational backgrounds?

_____

_____

How comfortable would you be requesting special education teachers in your district to urge their students' parents to attend the PACER workshop on special education laws?

very comfortable				not at all comfortable
1	2	3	4	5

R. If PACER has been involved in discussions between school staff and parents about special education service for a child in your district:

Do you have any suggestions for PACER regarding methods of promoting constructive communication?

_____

_____

How likely would you be to contact PACER for its opinion in a controversy with parents about their child's special education program?

very likely				very unlikely
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 6

A. In your opinion, would the following behaviors by parents be beneficial or detrimental to constructive involvement in their child's special education program?

(Circle the number that corresponds to your response choice)

	Always Beneficial	Sometimes Beneficial	Neither Beneficial nor Detrimental	Sometimes Detrimental	Always Detrimental	Inappropriate for My Students
1. observe and record their child's behavior at home	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. keep a running file of school materials related to their child (performance records, notes from staff, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. observe their child in class	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. discuss with teacher(s) between IEP meetings about their child's performance, whether good or problematic, at home and at school	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. communicate in writing to the teacher major concerns or disagreements with their child's school program	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. familiarize themselves with standardized tests or other behavioral measurements used in formally assessing their child (what they test, how they test, the relation of results to educational programming)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. review formal assessment results for how accurately and comprehensively they reflect their child's strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. familiarize themselves <u>before</u> going to the IEP meeting with class performance information and/or current formal assessment data.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. define their evolving short- and long-range goals for their child	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. invite a support person (friend, advocate, professional) to accompnay them to the IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. familiarize themselves with the rights guaranteed their child and themselves by the special education laws	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. familiarize themselves with what should be included in an IEP	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. familiarize themselves with the concept of writing IEP goals in behaviorally measurable terms	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. ask questions about what they do not understand and discuss/debate ideas with which they disagree during an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. make suggestions about what should be included as goals and objectives during an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. recognize that a special education teacher has a responsibility to serve the assessed needs of all students equally well	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. familiarize themselves with criteria for judging the quality (performance outcome measures) of their child's special education program	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. recognize that in addition to the quantity of special education service, the child's performance results must be considered in judging a program's appropriateness	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. familiarize themselves with the positive and negative effects of direct special education service (levels III-VI) and indirect service (levels I-II)	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. familiarize themselves with the positive and negative effects of their child's being taught academic, vocational and/or independent living skills	1	2	3	4	5	6

B. Please go back through question A (items 1-20), which you have just completed, while considering the following question: In which of those behaviors you marked "always beneficial" or "sometimes beneficial" would parents of your special education students need information or training? In the margin to the left of the behaviors in question A, write "yes" if you think a majority of parents would need information or training and write "no" if you think only a small number of parents would need information or training. Please write "yes" or "no" to the left of only those behaviors that you indicated would be "always beneficial" or "sometimes beneficial" in question A.

C. On the average, what percentage of your students' parents attend their child's IEP planning meeting?

(1) 0%-25% (2) 26%-50% (3) 51%-75% (4) 75%-100%

D. In what area(s) of special education is your current assignment? (Circle any that apply)

(1) LD (2) Speech (3) EMR (4) TMR (5) Early Childhood (6) ED (7) Autism (8) Physically Handicapped (9) Hearing Impaired (10) Vision Impaired (11) Other Health Impairments

E. At what level(s) of special education are your students being served? (Circle any that apply)

(1) Level I (2) Level II (3) Level III (4) Level IV (5) Level V (6) Level VI

F. What is the age range of the students you are serving this year? (Circle any that apply)

(1) 0-3 (2) 4-6 (3) 6-11 (4) 11-14 (5) 15-18 (6) 18-21

G. In what school district do you work?_____

H. For how many years have you taught special education children?

(1) 1-3 (2) 4-6 (3) 7-9 (4) 10-12 (5) more than 12

I. From what sources have you received information on special education laws?

(1) college course (2) district in-service (3) State Department of Education (4) disability group (5) parent advocacy organization (6) other (please specify)_____

_____

Answer the remaining question only if you have attended a PACER workshop for parents on special education laws.

J. To what degree did the PACER workshop promote the following? (Circle the number that corresponds to your response choice)

	Great Degree				Not At All	Don't Recall
(1) a view of special education teachers as partners with parents in advocating for the educational needs of handicapped children	1	2	3	4	5	6
(2) an awareness of the importance of parents' expressing their satisfaction, as well as any concerns, with their child's program	1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) an awareness that requests for service must be based on the assessed needs of the child	1	2	3	4	5	6
(4) an awareness that teachers by themselves cannot determine the amount or type of service available from the district and that parents should direct their concerns to the appropriate person in authority	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5) an awareness that an IEP is intended to serve the child's needs and not to promote the specific philosophies of either parents or staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
(6) openness by parents and teachers to trying ideas about which either may have reservation if there are no data to indicate these ideas would be unsuccessful	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7) an awareness that professional jargon can be intimidating and can serve to reduce communication during an IEP meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
(8) an awareness that the sheer number of professionals attending an IEP meeting can be intimidating to parents	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX 7

1. How is your organization defined?

   1. as a parent coalition
   2. as a parent support group
   3. as an organization representing a specific disability
   4. as a parent organization affiliated with a school district
   5. as a parent organization affiliated with a state department of education
   6. other_____

2. Does your organization have either a board of directors or an advisory board?

   1. yes 2. no

3. If yes to question 2, do parents constitute the majority of members on the board?

   1. yes 2. no

4. From what type of site does your organization operate?

   1. a home
   2. rented office space
   3. local school district facilities
   4. state department of education facilities
   5. other_____

5. Does your organization have full-time paid staff?

   1. yes (number___) 2. no

6. Does your organization have part-time paid staff?

   1. yes (number_____) 2. no

7. Does your organization utilize volunteers?

   1. yes (number_____) 2. no

8. What is/are the source(s) of your organization's funding? (Circle any that apply)

   1. federal department of education funds
   2. other federal funds
   3. state department of education funds
   4. other state funds
   5. local school district funds
   6. other local funds
   7. foundation funds
   8. corporate funds
   9. individual contributions
   10. client fees
   11. other_____

9. Has your organization contacted PACER for materials, information, or basic moral support?

1. yes 2. no 3. I don't know

10. If <u>yes</u> to question 9, based on the usefulness of the information you received in the past, how likely would you be to contact PACER again?

1	2	3	4	5
extremely likely	somewhat likely	unpredictable	somewhat unlikely	extremely unlikely

11. The following is a list of PACER materials available to parent information and training organizations. Please rate for usefulness those items you know your organization received.

	extremely useful				not at all useful	don't recall
1. parent workshop packet on special education laws	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. transparencies to accompany parent training workshop on special education laws	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. parent workshop packet on communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. transparencies to accompany parent workshop on communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. workshop packet for training parent trainers (outline of workshop content; advocacy materials)	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. <u>Parents Can Be the Key</u> (handbook for parents describing special education laws and procedures)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. <u>Parents Can be the Key</u> -bilingual (Spanish and English) edition	1	2	3	4	5	6

		extemely useful				not at all useful	don't recall
8.	Parents Training Parents (handbook describing PACER programs and organizational structure for use in replication)	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	the PACESETTER (PACER's general newsletter)	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	The PACER ADVOCATE (PACER's subscription newsletter)	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Parents Ask PACER (collection of frequently asked questions about special education issues)	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Parents Ask PACER -bilingual (Spanish and English) edition	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Unlocking Doors (booklet for parents to improve communication and assertiveness skills)	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	evaluation report (report describing goals and structure of each PACER project)	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	COUNT ME IN Resource Manual (handicap awareness puppet program for volunteer puppeteers and teachers)	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	COUNT ME IN Secondary Supplement (handicap awareness puppet program appropriate to secondary level students)	1	2	3	4	5	6

		extremely useful				not at all useful	can't recall
17.	Handbook for Coordinators of handicap awareness programs (guide for setting up handicap awareness programs)	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	Disabled?.. Yes. Able?...also, Yes, (booklet of stories about teenagers with handicapping conditions for secondary age students)	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	management materials (board policy, by-laws, position descriptions, personnel policies etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	operating forms (intake telephone sheets, workshop planning check lists, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	information on funding sources	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	evaluation forms and procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	sample public service announcements for radio, television, newspaper	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	sample workshop flyers	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. Has your organization developed publicity methods, program formats, or written materials effective in serving parents who have shown little involvement in their children's special education?

1. yes 2. no

13. if yes to question 12, would you please briefly describe these methods and/or materials?_____

_____

_____

_____

14. In the list below, circle the number on the left (1-9) corresponding to any service your organization provides. To the right of the services you provide, please indicate if you have incorporated any of the PACER materials listed in Question 11 (complete originals, partial reproductions, modified versions) in the delivery of service.

		yes	no	can't recall
1.	workshops on special education laws	1	2	3
2.	workshops on communication and assertiveness skills	1	2	3
3.	workshops on special education laws for specific groups, e.g. parents with hearing impaired children	1	2	3
4.	workshops to train parent trainers	1	2	3
5.	workshops on topical issues in special education e.g. minimum competency/diplomas/other issues	1	2	3
6.	individual advocacy for parents, provided over the phone	1	2	3
7.	individual assistance for parents, provided in-person, e.g. accompanying parents to IEP meetings	1	2	3
8.	special education information provided to professionals involved with handicapped youth	1	2	3
9.	handicap awareness programs in schools or community settings.	1	2	3
10.	newsletter mailed to parents and others	1	2	3

15. Approximately how many parents have you served during the last 12 month period?_____

16. What issues in special education do you think your organization will have to address in its parent services in the future?_____

_____

_____

17. What materials or information would be most helpful to your organization's operation now and in the near future?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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